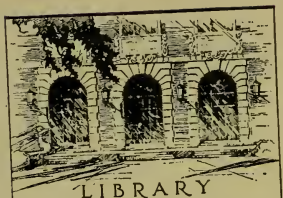

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THE

PILGRIM OF THE CROSS;

OR,

THE CHRONICLES

OF

CHRISTABELLE DE MOWBRAY.

AN ANCIENT LEGEND.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By ELIZABETH HELME,

AUTHOR OF

ST. MARGARET'S CAVE, OR THE NUN'S STORY;
LOUISA, OR THE COTTAGE ON THE MOOR;
ST. CLAIR OF THE ISLES, &C. &C.

VOL. IV.

BRENTFORD:
PRINTED BY AND FOR P. NORBURY;
AND SOLD BY
T. OSTELL, AVE-MARIA-LANE;
LONGMAN, HURST, REES, AND ORME, PATER-NOSTER ROW;
HATCHARD, PICCADILLY;
CARPENTER AND CO. OLD-BOND-STREET;
AND EARLE, ALBEMARLE-STREET, LONDON;
ALSO BY W. ANSELL, RICHMOND, SURREY.

1805.

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THE PILGRIM OF THE CROSS.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE baron's feelings almost overpowered his reason, he advanced towards the castle with frenzied haste, and scarcely conscious of what he did, proceeded to the apartments of Cicely. He had ever before entered them with the respect of a son, but he

stayed not now to pause, but rushing forward found the first apartment empty ; and as the day was closed, a single lamp illuminating it. Too much agitated for reflection, he advanced, calling on the dame and Adnee ; but no voice replying, he exclaimed in the anguish of his heart, "They are not here, fool that I was to suppose it ! they are carousing on Adnee's bridal day, and laughing at my folly."

Pausing a moment he thought he heard the sound of woe, and listening, he was convinced he was not mistaken. Again advancing through two chambers, which though they were his own he was unacquainted with, and which were only enlightened by the gleaming of the lamp in the first, and the shaded reflection of a taper in the last, and where pausing at the entrance he discovered an object that had nearly rendered him senseless, the beautiful and

and interesting Adnee!—not, as he supposed, in the arms of an enraptured bridegroom, but pale and death-like, supported on a couch by dame Cicely; while at her feet sat father la Roche, who apparently, in answer to somewhat she had advanced, replied, "Weak and doubting girl! such despondence is sinful; the blessing of Heaven is over you, and with a thankless hand you cast it away."

"Dear and respected father," replied she, "you well know a conventual life was long since my choice, though I shame to say the baron divided my soul with Heaven; but it is now too plain, that to him I am indifferent, or would he press me to wed Fitz-Hugh, Villeneuf, or any one, so I was disposed of."

De Pointz could scarcely believe the evidence of his senses; yet hastily advancing, he pronounced the name of

Adnee, and threw himself by the side of her couch.

A faint scream escaped the maid, who sunk powerless on the bosom of Cicely, while la Roche rising, said,—"This intrusion is unbecoming you, my Lord; the sensibility of this unhappy girl hath already undermined her constitution, and little more is wanting to make her fall a victim to it."

The baron made no reply, his eyes were fixed on Adnee, whose cold and death-like hand he clasped within his own.—"Adnee, my beloved!" exclaimed he, "for the love of Heaven combat this weakness!—though distracted as I am, to see thee thus, yet the weight of a mountain is removed from my breast."

Adnee appeared to collect her bewildered spirits, but concealed her face on the bosom of the dame without reply.

"Adnee,"

"Adnee," continued the baron, "behold a man to whom life is of no value unless 'tis passed with thee!—Alas! but an hour since I thought thee lost to me for ever.—Nay, I conjure thee speak to me!—Say, wilt thou not be mine?"

"My Lord! my Lord!" said la Roche, "what momentary resolution is this?—I conjure you to pause, to consider before you give rise to expectations, which hereafter you may not wish to fulfil."

"Not wish to fulfil, father!" repeated de Pointz. "Even this moment, before Heaven, if she will permit, I will plight her my faith. 'Tis no momentary resolve, as your friend Jaques can witness. Adnee is necessary to my happiness; and though I suffered Villeneuf to approach her, it was because I considered her a free agent; and that however I might internally suffer, I had no right to influence her. — Yet

more, if Fitz-Hugh had possessed her heart, I was willing to yield her,—for though dearer to me than the whole world, I would not hold a secondary place in her affection."

As neither Cicely nor Adnee replied, la Roche, addressing the latter, said,—"You hear, my beloved daughter, the noble offer of the baron; and though I would rather in this case be considered as an observer than an adviser, it is surely fitting that you give at once a candid answer."

Adnee timidly raised her head, and with her face glowing with blushes, replied,—"Oh, father, you know my heart; the baron too must know all its weakness!"

"Adnee," answered he, impatiently, "say but thou wilt accept me, and here on my knees I plight to thee my faith."

"Hold, my Lord!" interrupted she with more courage, "I charge you reserve your

your vows, for no tie shall bind you, till you know my every thought, as openly as they are known to Heaven."

"Again thou strikest a dagger through my heart!" said he. "On my part there is no obstacle, what can there be on thine, unless I have fondly deceived myself, and thou lovest another?"

"Not so," said la Roche, "I will pledge myself upon her honour and innocence, and that, till she knew the Baron de Pointz her heart was free."

"Nay then, there is none! — Come, my beloved, give me at least thy hand, and relieve my heart by saying that thou wilt be mine."

Adnee held out her hand,—"Witness the blessed saints," said she, "that if ever I wed, the Baron de Pointz, who hath so nobly overlooked my low estate, shall be

my lord;—otherwise, I solemnly vow to devote my days to Heaven."

The baron kissed her hand with transport, —" Beloved maid," exclaimed he, " reciprocal be the vow, for here I swear ——-"

" Ah, no!" exclaimed she, hastily interrupting him, " I conjure you spare me!—give me but a short time and you shall possess my whole confidence;—and then, if it so please you, my willing obedience."

" Nay, why not now? — Here, in the presence of the holy father and our good and respectable mother, I pray thee honour me with a trust that excites all my curiosity, if it be considerable enough to make thee refuse my vows till it be divulged."

" My Lord," replied Adnee, " if hereafter I should rise so far above my most sanguine hopes as to be the possessor of your heart, I trust that never may my soul breathe a wish that I would desire to conceal from

from you; but in the present case I pray a few days patience."

De Pointz was too much elated to raise objections; he was satisfied, from the assurances of the friar, and by the whole demeanour of the maid, that she had nothing to relate which could interrupt the felicity he promised himself.

"Well then," replied he, "it shall be at your own time;—but I pray you remember my impatience."

"Daughter," said la Roche, with some warmth, "this delay displeases me, and is unworthy the usual candour of thy character."

"Ah, father," returned she, "I am, indeed, truly sensible how severely I have tried your kindness; and if you command, however repugnant to my desires, I will obey.—Yet if I might crave a short respite,

it would confer an obligation never to be forgotten."

"I will hear nothing now, Adnee, that thou canst wish to conceal," said the baron. "Let me but see thee in thy usual health, hear thy sweet voice, and consider myself as a welcome candidate for thy esteem, and I have nothing to desire till thou shalt bless me yet further by giving me a legal right to claim thee all my own."

The discourse lasted for a considerable time, and would longer, for the baron was in no haste to depart, but the dame observing that she thought Adnee required rest, he unwillingly, accompanied by la Roche, tore himself away.

Entering the hall, they found Jaques and Hamet, who had returned to the castle even before the baron, but whom, in the thought of losing Adnee, he had totally forgotten.

The

The baron openly declared his resolves, which Jaques heard with reserve; while on the contrary, Hamet warmly applauded them, and called upon la Roche to do the same.—"In this case," answered he, "the baron must determine for himself. The judgment of man is circumscribed, and frequently erroneous, yet thus far I will venture to affirm, that the education of the maid hath been all that could be wished, even from the greatest, or most pious; nor were the instructions she received sown on a thankless soil, for they were matured by a noble disposition, and a mind eager to imbibe, and warm in the pursuit of virtue. Had it pleased Heaven to have endowed her with a heart less susceptible, she might have enjoyed more happiness, for in gratitude and affection she is an enthusiast, and the leading traits of her character called into action, she rises above the

the weakness of her sex; for though her form is truly feminine, the fragile envelopement contains the soul of a hero."

The baron snatched the friar's hand, and expressed the satisfaction this account of the maid gave him;—but casting his eyes on Jaques, he thought he regarded la Roche with some severity, as though he conceived he had entered too warmly into the subject. Passing, however, the remark in silence, he informed them of his meeting with Jonas, and the information he had received from him, adding, he now was convinced the whole was a falsehood, invented for some purpose by Jonas, whom he was resolved to dismiss for ever from the castle, the ensuing morning.

"Would it not be more just," said the friar, "to wait the return of the Knight Fitz-Hugh?—There may be a mistake without Jonas being guilty."

"My

"My mind is too much harmonized to night, father," answered the baron, "not to take your counsel; — yet I have no doubt 'tis either falsehood or mistake, for Fitz-Hugh would not take so material a step without acquainting me."

"There may be reasons," replied the friar, "which might make him consider concealment necessary; his bride may be beneath him in rank, or might labour under other objectionable disadvantages."

"I will banish them," answered the baron warmly, "my life and fortune are at his service, so he hath not stolen the heart of Adnee. — Yet can I not think him wedded, for he could not so cautiously conceal the object of his affection from us, who at most must have been a very new acquaintance."

"Will not that observation, my Lord," said Jaques, "hold good respecting Adnee?"

"No,"

"No," replied de Pointz, "Adnee, brought up in the castle, of virtuous parents, patronized by my mother, beloved by Christabelle, and approved by la Roche, bears a testimony of worth that cannot be disputed."

"By a man in love," answered Jaques. —"Well I have done, and if it must be, can only pray that Heaven may smile on the union."

The entrance of the domestics, bearing supper, broke on the discourse, which was no more resumed that evening.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XLIX.

AT early morn the baron arose and repaired to the apartment of dame Cicely, whom he found already risen;—enquiring after Adnee, she informed him that she had passed a quiet night, and that she had hopes a few days repose would restore her health. Cheered by the information, and his mind more collected than the evening before, he walked forth to enjoy the morning breeze, and to contemplate on what

what had passed. The words of Adnee, which he overheard as he entered her apartment astonished him;—she spoke as long devoted to a conventual life, and that himself alone, as he construed her meaning, had divided her thoughts with Heaven.—It was also obvious, that she had been grieved even unto sickness, by the offer of Villeneuf, and the supposition that she was attached to Fitz-Hugh; and what yet equally astonished him was, the secret which she had so earnestly entreated la Roche to delay to communicate. Pausing on the subject, he was flattered by the reflection that their passion was mutual, and was powerful enough, though she was then hopeless of a return, to make her refuse Villeneuf. For the secret of which la Roche spoke, it on a second review gave him no material concern, for he merely judged it some vow which perhaps it was necessary

necessary the church should dissolve before she could accept his hand, and which her piety held in terror before her.

Fitz-Hugh also employed a part of his thoughts.—Though the intelligence of his marriage he had no doubt was false, yet, swayed by the advice of la Roche, he resolved not to condemn Jonas till the knight returned.

At the breakfast hour he was met by Jaques and Hamet, whom he accompanied to the chapel of St. Mary, where they attended the sacred service; after which they conversed for some time with the friars. The discourse was interrupted by a lay brother, who entering, informed them that four men were without, who requested to speak with the fathers of the monastery. The baron and his friends would have retired, but the priests requesting their stay, and they being assured it was no material business,

business, consented. The men being introduced, they first bowed before the altar, then crossing themselves, they knelt and prayed devoutly, the fathers following their example. At length rising, one of them said,—"To Heaven, holy fathers, be the glory!—Strangers till within these ten days to our mother country, we can but return thanks to the Virgin, who hath suffered us once more to breathe the same air with our Christian brethren. We bring a letter for you from the chapel of St. John, in Palestine, while eight of our fellow travellers are, as in duty bound, gone on the same errand to the castle of Latimer; the noble baron of which, left money with the superior of St. John's, to liberate whatever Christians he could discover, from slavery, whose ransom came within the amount of the sum so left."

"I

"I would I could have doubled it," answered the baron. "Eight said ye?—By my life, the good fathers have laid out the money to advantage."

"And so have you, my Lord," replied the superior of the monastery. "The blessing of Heaven rest on you for the deed, which is doubly praiseworthy, as it was unknown and unexpected. But speak, my honest friends, if the men, whom the baron's money liberated, are gone to the castle, who are ye?"

"This letter will inform you," replied the spokesman, presenting one which he drew from his bosom. "As the duty of our brethren, led them to the castle of Latimer, ours first commanded us here."

The superior opened the letter, which he read aloud.

"*Father Thomas, of the Monastery of St. John, in Palestine, to his brethren in*

in the true faith, Father John and his associates, of St. Mary's Chapel, near the Castle of Latimer, Durham, greeting.

"The young and devout pilgrim called Bertram, who brought a golden censer to present to our patron saint, also a sum of money to pray for the dead, before the crusaders and pilgrims, whom he accompanied, left Palestine, intrusted to us to the amount of an hundred pieces of gold, for the redemption of Christian captives. In different parts of this infidel country we have collected four, the bearers of this letter; who we trust will reach you in safety, as it was the request of the young pilgrim, that they should on their arrival present themselves at St. Mary's. Eight purchased by the generosity of the Baron de Pointz accompany them; and also bear a letter to their noble liberator, whom, with yourselves, and the pious Bertram,

tram, we shall not fail to remember in our prayers."

During the perusal the baron fixed his eyes on Jaques with earnestness, and saw the veteran's eyes overflow with tears; but judging that his emotions proceeded from the recollection of his own slavery, he forbore to notice it. In truth, he had scarcely a thought for any one but Bertram.—That he should again hear of the virtuous actions of that youth, brought even into his own domain, and into the bosom of the church, staggered his belief; and nothing less than the full and ample confirmation he had of his guilt, could have made him for a moment doubt his innocence.

His reflections were somewhat diverted by questions which the priests put to the strangers, as what had been their former station? how long they had been in slavery? and

and by what means they had reached England, as they had left Palestine more than two months after the crusaders? They were all men of inferior rank, and the terms of their slavery had been various, but none exceeding ten years; they had also been collected, as the letter expressed, from different parts, and sent to St. John's, where after a short stay, they embarked on board a trading vessel bound to Leghorn, from which place they soon after sailed, and having a speedy voyage, reached England in safety, and where, true to the command they had received from the fathers, they repaired, the one party to the Chapel of St. Mary, and the other to the Castle of Latimer.

The account concluded, the baron said, "Well, my honest friends, when your duties here are fulfilled, hie ye to the castle of Latimer, where ye shall meet a welcome; and

and then if ye have friends ye wish to search out, such monies as will enable ye to reach them, shall be given ye."

The Baron, with Jaques and Hamet, soon after left the chapel. For some time they proceeded in silence, till at length the baron, addressing them suddenly, said, "What think ye now of Bertram?

"What think *you*, my lord?" replied Jaques.

"That he is either the most virtuous youth that ever dignified human nature, or the most depraved that ever disgraced it,—his situation admits of no medium. Heaven is my witness, how sincerely I should rejoice to find him innocent, though the discovery would cover me with confusion, for having dared to dispute it."

"I wonder that you did not ask the priests whether they knew such a youth?" said Jaques.

"The

"The words were on my lips," replied the baron, "but that I feared their questions in return, and dreaded any that might lead towards making his story public; we will however ask la Roche when alone. It is plain that Bertram wished me to know that he had liberated these men, by commanding that they should repair to St. Mary's, yet was he not vain-glorious, for never did he boast of his wealth or power; and though he was ever cloathed with peculiar neatness and propriety, yet his garments were coarse and humble, as was also the fare of his tent, which I have sometimes shared."

"The enigma will, I have no doubt, be solved some day," said Hamet, "and I trust satisfactorily."

"Amen,' answered the baron, "though it should be to my cost. Poor lad, when the money was left with the fathers of St. John,

John's, he doubtless expected to be with me at Latimer, or elsewhere; and in that case would have learned the safe arrival of these men. Heaven grant that his generosity may not have reduced him to unpleasant straits."

"You did not consider that in your own person, when in Palestine, my Lord," said Jaques.

"In faith no, but in that there was nothing to boast, for on my return I knew I should be amply supplied,—not so perhaps poor Bertram."

Thus conversing they reached the castle, in one of the outward halls of which they found the strangers, who awaited the return of the baron.—With heart-felt gratitude they threw themselves at his feet, and in broken accents expressed their thanks.

"Rise, my friends," said the baron, "that posture is due to Heaven alone,

there pay your thanks;—I rejoice in this case to have been its unworthy agent. Ye must be weary, go in, my vassals will give ye food and fresh raiment, and some time hence we will talk further."

The strangers again expressed their thanks, and having presented a letter to the baron, accompanied Gregory to the inner apartments of the castle.

The letter to the baron ran thus:

"*The fathers of the holy chapel of St. John, in Palestine, to the noble Baron Philip de Pointz, greeting.*

"THE gold you left us we have expended to the best of our judgment, and can only pray Heaven it may hereafter repay you tenfold interest.—Eight men owe to you more than life,—their deliverance from slavery, and their restoration to a Christian land.—By question we find, that some of them have been soldiers, the

others

others part of the crew of a British vessel wrecked in these seas, and saved by a Saracen galley to be plunged into a state more bitter than death. Four men accompany them, liberated by the pilgrim Bertram, to whom, if yet with you, we pray you to give our warmest blessings.—Farewel, and may the saints have both in their holy keeping shall be the constant prayer of

"*The fathers of St. John of Palestine.*"

The baron having read the letter presented it to his friends, and apologizing for a short absence he hastened to the apartments of the dame, who informed him that Adnee was better; and on his requesting to see her, replied, that in the afternoon she would endeavour to prepare her to receive him.—Leaving his most tender wishes for her, he departed and joined his friends at dinner, after which, as speedily as possible,

he again left them, and hastened to Cicely's apartment. — He found Adnee in the outward chamber, and though weak and pale, much recovered. She would have risen to receive him, but flying to her he reseated her. — "Beloved of my soul," said he, taking her hand, "I have not words to express how much I rejoice to see thee.—But why this soft confusion—why dost thou tremble? — Hast thou not pledged to me thy vow, and though thou wouldst not accept mine in return, it is registered in my own heart, and witnessed in Heaven."

"My Lord," said she, averting her blushing face, "should Heaven indeed decree, and I, undeserving as I am, become ———.—Pardon me, I know not what I say,—but should I ever be the wife of the Baron de Pointz, not for his rank, but for himself must my affection flow."

"Dame

"Dame Cicely, speak, bless your children," exclaimed the baron, "who will never forget the reverence due to you."

Dame Cicely was pale, and appeared even more oppressed than Adnee,—"My Lord, my Lord," said she, "may the Virgin and holy saints bless you and the woman of your choice!—May I be permitted to see the union take place, and before I die clasp your children to my aged bosom!"

Adnee's face was covered with blushes, and turning away she made no reply, when the baron clasping the dame's hand, said,—"You, my good Cicely, will be my mother, and I will reverence you as such."

Cicely burst into tears, and quitted the apartment. "Adnee," said the baron, "if I could for a moment suppose my rank made me thus formidable, I could almost wish to relinquish it.—By thy side, tending sheep on the mountains' brow, or culti-

vating the vallies, I could be content; I feel no distinction from being born noble, but as it may contribute to thy happiness."

"I have a secret, my Lord, of such import," replied she hesitatingly, "that——"

"I will not hear it," interrupted he; "hereafter I will guess it. Shouldest thou have even made a vow of celibacy we will surmount it, and offer to the saints a golden virgin in thy stead."

"It is no jest, my Lord."

"If it be sorrowful, banish the remembrance, I pray; seated by thee, I can think of nothing but joy. But to change the subject, when thou art able, thou must see some unhappy men who are just arrived from Palestine, where they have been many years in slavery."

"Indeed! I pray you, my Lord, how many may there be?"

"Eight

"Eight are come to the castle, and four to St. Mary's; the last number liberated by that youth whom I before mentioned to thee."

"Bertram! he offended you, my Lord?"

"To give my feelings a truer name, he grieved me, Adnee; I loved him truly, and to find him a hypocrite, vexed me to the heart."

"What was his crime, my Lord?"

"Too gross for thee to hear; yet if thou art curious, I will tell thee hereafter."

Adnee blushed deeply. "But are you assured he was guilty, my Lord?"

"It admits no doubt.—I think, in spite of all, he loved me, and as one proof, I regard his sending these men to Latimer; the unhappy discovery of his falsehood did not take place till we reached England."

"I would I might be his advocate; events which sometimes appear certain, on

close investigation are found otherwise, and should he hereafter prove himself innocent, you would condemn your hasty belief."

"I was not hasty to believe, my lovely mediatrix, for I loved Bertram too well not to doubt, and would fain have disbelieved the evidence of my senses. At parting he took my glove, which he promised to wear in his cap, when he could present himself before me bold in conscious innocence."

"Think you he will keep his word, my Lord."

"I know not, my sweet questioner, but innocent he cannot prove himself; were that possible, thou must be prepared to love him, for he was dear to me as a brother. Nay, to confess truly, I know not whether the strong resemblance thy features bear to his, and the music of thy voice to his also, did not first enslave my heart."

"Then,"

"Then," answered she, timidly, "am I indeed obliged to Bertram."

"I spoke only of the first time I saw thee," replied he.—"Adnee once known, must be beloved for herself; Bertram, tho' he possessed thy beautiful symmetry of features, had not such an alabaster skin to boast; his was darker, and more sallow than those of the native Saracens, and his hair, though luxuriant as thine, of the most sable hue. But let us cease to talk of him, an object more dear to me employs all my thoughts; and though I would not press on thy delicacy, I pray thee consider, that the sooner thou becomest legally mine, the greater obligation I must owe thee. I wonder thy father, le Val, is not returned, his presence I deem necessary; 'tis a duty we owe to wait for his sanction.—I have thought of dispatching messengers to hasten him, in the mean time consider in

what I may be gratified and honoured by obliging thee."

"I have nothing to wish, my Lord, but a continuance of sentiments so favourable to me, and that Heaven may render me worthy the distinction you honour me with. —Yet, one request I will make, and that is ———"

"What, my beloved, that I may hasten to execute it?"

"Think mercifully of poor Bertram."

"The little traitor needed not such an advocate as thee, when even my own heart rebels against me in his favour."

"Nay then,—I would I could acquire courage.—Oh, my Lord!"

"Thy voice fails—thou art ill," interrupted he, "thy complexion varies—thy lips are pale—and thou tremblest." As he spoke he hastened to the door of the apartment, calling aloud,—"What ho,

ho, who waits without?—Say I request the presence of dame Cicely." Then returning to the almost fainting Adnee, he supported her in his arms.

"Oh! my Lord," said she, "for the present I conjure you leave me; I wish to shew you all my heart, but my courage fails me."

Cicely at that moment entered; and giving Adnee some water, she revived.

"'Tis all my fault, dear dame," said the baron, "studying my own gratification, I have fatigued her to death. I pray ye lead her in, and let her repose awhile on her couch;—I will punish myself for this folly, by not seeing her till to-morrow."

Adnee held out her hand, which the baron pressed to his lips; and though she appeared to wish to detain him, he forced himself from her presence.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER L.

INTOXICATED with love, the baron conversed but little with his guests during the evening, and at an early hour retired to rest. His first care in the morning was to enquire of Adnee's health, of which receiving a favourable account, he joined his friends in renovated spirits.

Near noon, as the baron was expressing his astonishment at the absence of Fitz-Hugh,

Hugh, the knight suddenly entered. — "Give you good day, my friends," said he. "In faith, hereafter you may judge I love you well, by the sacrifice I have made to pay you this visit."

The baron fixed his eyes on Fitz-Hugh, whose features, if possible, expressed more than their usual vivacity. His garments were new, and from the gaiety of their appearance, corroborated the account of Jonas, that he was a bridegroom.

"I know not how to bid thee welcome," said de Pointz, "for strange news hath reached us in thy absence; report says thou art wedded."

"In faith, then for once, my Lord, it hath truly spoken."

"Impossible! thou must jest; thou art acquainted with no woman sufficiently to entrust the happiness of thy life to her keeping."

"Pish,

"Pish, I love not long courtships; all the stock of tenderness exhausted before hand, no wonder we see so little left to keep affection alive afterwards. I advised my little varlet to take me while in the humour, or as I was naturally volatile, the inclination might fly off; and she wisely took my counsel. You, my Lord, are *prudent*; and I am not without hopes of having sons and daughters old enough to assist at the ceremony of your marriage before it takes place."

"Fitz-Hugh, I cannot jest on such an occasion; thou knowest I value thy welfare, and this hasty and private marriage looks not well,—say who and what is thy wife, if thou art really wedded."

"Even such a thing as would suit you, my Lord."

"Ridiculous!—Again I ask what rank she holds in society?"

"The

"The world calls her a woman,—I think her an angel."

"I but lose time," said the baron, "and yet I cannot but be interested for thee;—prithee be serious, of what family is this woman thou hast chosen?"

"Her great paternal ancestor was a gardener, and her maternal great grandmother was sole cook, confidant, and caterer to the king of the whole earth."

"At all events thou art insane, and thy marriage consequently not valid," said the baron. "I will talk to thee no further."

"Her great ancestor," resumed Fitz-Hugh, "was Adam, the first of that name, let the Baron de Pointz, as he appears partial to geneaology *in a wife*, go higher if he can;—and dame Eve gave such an excellent relish to his soup, that he never wished for any other cook."

The

The baron though vexed, could not refrain a smile; while Jaques said,—"At least favour us with her name?"

"Her name," replied Fitz-Hugh, "willingly, 'tis the sweetest, softest, prettiest name in nature,—a name I am convinced the baron will admire."

"Put him to the proof," said Jaques.

"Adnee—Adnee,—I am not ashamed of her name."

"Adnee!" repeated the baron, starting in spite of himself.

"Aye, Adnee, my Lord, my own Adnee; who I flatter myself would not exchange the poor knight Fitz-Hugh, for the noble and wealthy Baron de Pointz. Why you look surprised, my Lord; surely you do not mean to monopolize all the Adnees in the world?"

"Assuredly not, one will content me; but prithee, as thou hast taken the cork from

from thy bottle of intelligence, and the first effervescence is evaporated, compleat what thou hast so wisely begun, and give us her surname."

"Fitz-Hugh," returned the knight.

"Marry, we know that," said de Pointz, "but her former surname."

"Surnames, my Lord, are a new fashion*; and Adnee shall bear only mine."

"At thy pleasure; but if thou art not ashamed of what thou hast done, why didst thou not bring her with thee?"

"Because I did not choose to endanger mine honour, by throwing such a piece of temptation in your way.—Were there a lady indeed to bid her welcome."

"Thou shalt not long plead that excuse,—I am resolved to wed."

"I

* Surnames were first used among the nobility about the year 1200.

" I rejoice to hear it, a state of singleness is not good for man;—you know not the comforts of a wedded life."

" *Thou* wilt be a better judge of them a twelvemonth hence."

" I hope so, for then, perhaps, there may be three voices instead of two, in the matrimonial concert. But enough of this, I have more material news for thine ear."

" I pray thee then divulge it."

" I learned from the superior of the monastery, that in consequence of the conduct of the king to the bishops, that the kingdom, which hath for two years been under an interdiction, will speedily be excommunicated by the pope, for the profaneness, lust and cruelty of the king and his adherents, can no longer be overlooked; in which case, the barons, already weary of the tyrannous administration of John, will not fail to collect their powers and inforce the restoration

restoration of their ancient rights and privileges."

"If it be indeed so," replied Jaques, "again shall my ready arm draw the willing sword, for the name of John is hateful to my ear."

"In this case," said de Pointz, "my blood is warm as your's, my life and fortune shall be ready;—on the first call I will gather my dependants, and join those who oppose him."

"Henry the Second was a brave man," said Jaques, "and, with the exception of being a slave to his passions, deserved to rule; and though I loved him not, yet, as my liege lord, I should have held myself bound to fight or die in his defence. To Richard I had a double tie, I loved him as a man, and honoured him as a king. For John, ever from infancy he has been a deceiver;

ceiver;—false to his father, a traitor to his brother, and a scourge to his country."

"Well," said Fitz-Hugh, "I must hasten back to my good dame, who made me promise not to tarry; yet, with your leave, I should like to pay my respects to *your* fair Adnee before my departure."

"You have my permission, if that be needful," replied the baron, "Adnee is mistress of herself. If thy wife is such as I wish, her company would be welcome, but much I doubt thy mysterious conduct bodes no good."

Fitz-Hugh made no reply, but leaving the hall, went, as he said, to pay his respects to Adnee.—His visit appeared longer than the baron expected, but too noble minded to suffer jealousy to enter his thoughts, after the proofs he had received of her affection, he merely conjectured that Fitz-Hugh

Hugh was equally fascinated with her conversation as himself. The interview concluded, the knight bid the baron and his friends farewel, promising, however, to see them in a day or two.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER LI.

ON the ensuing morning, the news of Fitz-Hugh, respecting the state of the nation, was confirmed to the baron by various reports, and particularly by Sir John la Tours, who called early at the castle; and though enervated with age, declared he would join the discontented barons against King John. Jaques so decidedly concurred in the opinions of the veteran, that he won his heart.—"Methinks," said he, after

after a long pause, contemplating his features, "I have a vague idea of your person, but where or when I know not, but it must be many, many years since.—Were you ever in this country before?"

"Aye, my good Sir, but my native spot is far hence.—Yet, as you say, some almost thirty years back, I think I remember you."

After the departure of the knight, the baron who had seen Adnee but for a few moments in the morning, requested a short audience in Cicely's apartment.

He found her already informed of the rumour of civil war, and anticipating its dreadful effects; though no word escaped her to influence his conduct.

"My dear maid," said he, "as 'tis probable my honour may call me to take an active part in this contest, I would lose no time in first making you mine.—Nay, why that blush, you know my heart, I flatter myself

myself I know your's, and though in any other circumstances I would make every concession to your delicacy, yet I wish, in case of my departure, to leave a worthy mistress to my vassals."

"My Lord," replied she, "Heaven forefend that the holy ties to which I wish to owe the whole blessing of my life, should be formed in such an unauspicious moment as that in which the flames of civil discord rages through the land.—If it be, that I *must* lose you, at least I will mourn you with virgin tears."

De Pointz kissed her hand,—"The king is now at Nottingham," said he, "and the intention of the barons is to wait on him there, and to demand, as becomes men who prefer peace to war, a restoration of their ancient rights and privileges; which when granted, if John can reconcile himself to the church, all will go well."

"Heaven

"Heaven gift the barons with the power of persuasion, and the king with a willing heart to satisfy them," answered she, "though much I fear you will find him refractory."

"He must then be taught reason," replied the baron. "But away with an ungrateful subject, I wish thou wouldst see and become acquainted with my friends, Jaques and Hamet; they are both prepared to love and honour thee, but complain, that though they have been so long resident in the castle, thou hast ever shunned their presence."

"Not from dislike, my Lord.—I honour both, nay, I love them; not only as your friends, but for their own apparent worth."

"Thou wilt then, perhaps, suffer me to introduce them to thee to-morrow?"

"Excuse me, my Lord, for the present, hereafter I shall obey you with pleasure."

"Adnee," said the baron, with a smile, "why dost thou refuse to them what thou grantest to Fitz-Hugh?—Is it that thou esteem him most?"

Adnee's face and neck were covered with blushes, and, after a moment's pause, she replied,—"No, my Lord; from the little judgment I have of each, I honour the noble Jaques, for such I must deem him, beyond all men, yourself excepted.—At Hamet's feet too, methinks I long to kneel and pay my duty;—but pardon me, the keen penetrating eye of the first appears to read my heart, I tremble in his presence, and conscious of my weakness and unworthiness shrink at the scrutiny."

"And why, my diffident but candid love?—So pure do I hold thy mind, that could the world read its every thought, I

am

am convinced thou hast not one to blush for."

"You judge too favourably," replied she hesitatingly, and her eyes filling with tears. —"Is there no crime in presumptuous love, which could so far overpower a heart before devoted to Heaven, to forget ——"

"I will not hear thee," interrupted the baron. "So may Heaven prosper my soul hereafter, if I would yield thy heart, to be master of the world."

At that moment Cicely, who knew not that the baron was in the apartment, entered, and the conversation ceased.—The baron, though he respected her, could for the time have wished her absence, and Adnee, though she sincerely loved her, felt her presence a restraint; for struggling with herself for courage, to open her whole heart to de Pointz, the entrance of a third per-

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son oppressed her, and made her resolve to postpone what she had to communicate.

On the baron's return to the hall, he found Jaques, with la Roche and Hamet, in close consultation.—The sound of Jaques's voice, as he entered, bespoke impatience, and that of Hamet persuasion; while the words of the friar were alone intelligible.—"Leave all to Heaven," said he, "which as it hath began, will end its work without your interference."

The baron judging that their conversation was particular, would have withdrawn, but all entreating his stay, he took his seat.

On the day but one following, la Roche then informed him, the strangers who had been freed from Palestine by his liberality and that of the young Bertram, were to pay their duty at the chapel, having first made

made confession, and received absolution for the many years they had been estranged from the church.—Adding, that the service would be solemn and private, as otherwise the singularity of the circumstance might lead many, from curiosity only, to witness the ceremony.

"I also," said Jaques, "think it my duty to be among the number of the redeemed captives of that day, and to join my thanks with theirs; for sad as my heart is at times, I am far more happy than my most sanguine hopes could presage."

"I will join you," said Hamet, "Christianity hath soothed the sorrows I thought incurable; and though I must ever deplore my Selima, yet," added he, with a sigh, "we shall, as my first pious comforter observed, I now know, meet again."

"You mean Bertram, I judge," said the baron, "and as I regard all safe with my

good friend la Roche, I wish to ask him, whether himself or any of the friars of his house, before the arrival of the liberated captives, were acquainted with that youth?"

"*I was*, my Lord," replied the father.

"You astonish me.—Where knew you him?—who were his parents?—what is his general character?"

"I am not at liberty to answer questions which relate to matters entrusted to my keeping.—Yet thus far, my Lord, I can satisfy you, without a breach of confidence. —Bertram's family is noble, and for character I know him affectionate, grateful, and pious."

"Our conversation is sacred, father, therefore I shall speak freely,—are you assured that he is really pious?—is he not rather a specious deceiver?"

"No, on my life," answered la Roche, "love, pure chaste love is the greatest folly,

folly, if it can be called such, that the heart of Bertram ever knew."

"Pure chaste love, father!" replied the baron, ironically;—but fearful of saying ought that might injure the youth, he, on a momentary reflection, remained silent, and the conversation ceased.

CHAPTER LII.

ON the day appointed for the thanksgiving of the liberated captives, the chapel was prepared—wax tapers were lighted before the altars of the saints—flowers decorated the walls—and the mingled vapours of myrrh and frankincense perfumed the air. The seat formerly used by the baroness, was new covered with silk for the baron; and around it was placed benches for

for his vassals and dependants. The nuns of the convent were separated from the body of the chapel by a railing; and a gallery was prepared for strangers, that they might view the ceremony without crowding or interrupting the solemnity.

The baron had risen with the dawn, and walked to the chapel; where on entering he discovered dame Cicely, Adnee, and la Roche prostrate before the altar of the Virgin, Retiring, at a distance he waited till their orisons concluded, when approaching them, he said,—"I am vexed I intruded on you; but indeed, my dear Adnee, when I am honoured by calling you mine, I will not suffer you to destroy your health thus. Your eyes are swollen, your complexion pale, and your fragile form bent like a willow to the earth."

"My good Sir," answered la Roche, "well may it be so,—since midnight we

have passed here the hours in prayer. If the maid hath gross sins I know them not, yet have I confessed her since infancy;—I pray you try if you have more influence than I to make her reveal them."

"Father, you are displeased with me," replied Adnee; "I have no sins but what you know,—yet have I enough, unless the saints plead for me, to plunge me into jeopardy."

"Since midnight!" repeated de Pointz, "good Heaven, no wonder then at your faded cheek; why, sweet maid, have you done this?—Or rather, my good dame, why have you permitted it?"

"'Twas my own deed, my Lord; I wished to pray the Virgin to inspire me with courage, and to guide me through the most awful moment of my life."

The baron who judged she alluded to a marriage with himself, pressed her hand. "Why,"

"Why," said he, "would you exhaust your strength and spirits by this watching? —I wished to see you at the ceremony of to-day, but must now insist to the contrary, for it is needful you retire to rest."

Adnee bowed, and the baron insisting on accompanying her to the castle, they bid la Roche farewel, and took the way homeward. De Pointz remarked her spirits were much depressed, for she sighed frequently and scarcely spoke; but placing her depression to want of rest, he left her at the entrance of her apartment, tenderly requesting that both the dame and herself would immediately retire. Though early, Jaques and Hamet were already in the hall; and the breakfast over, they prepared to attend at the chapel, though the ceremony was not to take place till the hour of noon.

The

The liberated captives first attended, and having privately and separately confessed and received absolution, remained within the monastery. De Pointz, surrounded by his vassals and dependants, sat in the seat allotted him. The priests were arranged round the altar, the nuns placed within the railing, and the mass on the point of beginning, when the baron's attention was called forth, by Fitz-Hugh's entering the chapel, leading a woman, whom he instantly recognized for the fictious Alan, notwithstanding that decorated in the habit of her sex, she appeared far more beautiful than he could have surmised. In any other place the baron would not have restrained his anger; but in the face of Heaven, on so solemn an occasion, it was impossible to shew it, he therefore remained silent, his eye fixed on the intruders.

Fitz-Hugh,

Fitz-Hugh, having placed the lady, withdrew a moment, and returned with a youth, whom he placed on his right hand, and above him, and in whom the baron, to his still greater astonishment, by his mien, recognised Bertram, for his face was concealed by his pilgrim's hood and hat, which he still wore, as also his long grey cloak.

The wife of Fitz-Hugh, for such the baron had no doubt he now saw in the late fictious Alan, no longer attracted his attention; every thought was absorbed in Bertram, in whose hat, he, to his yet greater amazement, discovered his own glove, which the youth had promised to wear when he could shew himself before him with honour. Even the holy service which had called forth his attendance, faded before his sight, his ear was regardless of the *Te Deum* which echoed through

through the vaulted roof; and at once doubting, yet hoping Bertram's innocence, he endeavoured to assume an appearance of calmness and unconcern, which he was incapable of feeling. Even the liberated captives had entered the chapel unobserved by him, preceded by Jaques to the foot of the altar, where they all kneeled; as did also Hamet, who was led by la Roche.

Bertram's head was sunk on his bosom, he appeared to pray fervently; and in the hymn which closed the solemnity, the baron discovered his melodious notes mingling in the concert, sweet as those of Adnee, and raised with pious rapture on the blissful occasion.

The baron longed for the ceremony to end, his heart in spite of himself was with Bertram; though respecting him he was still racked with uncertainty. The proof of his innocence, which he had promised

to

wear, was indeed in his hat.—Fitz-Hugh, it was plain, espoused his cause; nay, would *he* wed a wanton, and encourage her paramour?—that was impossible! yet Fitz-Hugh was volatile, he might be deceived, and intoxicated by love, yield to the delusion of the moment.

Considering thus, as the hymn closed, the baron observed Bertram rise; and receiving the hand of the fictious Alan from Fitz-Hugh, he bowed as he passed before the altar, and with her left the chapel.

Though disappointed by the retreat of Bertram, the baron had no doubt that he would repair to the castle; and leaving his seat, and addressing the strangers from Palestine, he prayed them all to favour him with their company at Latimer, where he should be gratified to entertain them. All bowed and accepted the invitation; and Jaques and Hamet joining him, they left

left the chapel. At the door they met Fitz-Hugh, who bid them good day, to which though Jaques and Hamet replied, the baron made no answer.

The knight, however, was not to be repulsed, but particularly addressing de Pointz, he said,—"My Lord, I cannot bear your coolness; had Heaven given you a brother, he would not have loved you better than I have done. I feel for your doubts and uneasiness, and nothing but the most binding oaths could prevent me from revealing what I know; yet be assured all will end to your wishes."

The baron, who truly loved Fitz-Hugh, though he was much offended at his late mysterious conduct, was at once moved and astonished by this address.—"If," replied he, "you are really my friend, why have you entered into engagements to conceal that which may be needful to my honour

honour to be informed of?—I know you will say Bertram is innocent; but beware, Fitz-Hugh, that you are not yourself deceived, for intoxicated with the beauty of the wanton you have unhappily made your wife, she doubtless can beguile your easy faith at pleasure, till she undoes you, as she has done Bertram."

"By my soul, my wife is virtuous, and before two days pass you shall know your error; or I will leave the kingdom, and repair with her to Normandy. This resolution I have formed a week past; Bertram knows it, and will not put me to that disagreeable alternative."

"Shall we not see him at the castle?"

"Not to-day, I fear, my Lord; yet shall you know who he is, and his reasons for the semblance of mystery he hath assumed,—I have his word for the disclosure."

"He

"He will do well to throw off concealment," said Jaques, with marked severity, "it befits not his own honour, nor his future prospects in life."

Fitz-Hugh fixed his eyes on Jaques, but made no reply.

Thus discoursing they reached the castle, but the baron, before he entered the hall, repaired to the apartment of Adnee, where he found only an ancient female domestic, who informed him that both the dame and her daughter were, as she hoped, retired to rest. Commanding them not to be disturbed, he joined his friends, and the dinner being served, he exerted himself to make the liberated captives, who were entertained at his own board, forget the sorrow they had encountered. Each related the means by which he had fallen into slavery, and his subsequent misfortunes; an example that both the baron and Fitz-Hugh felt

astonished

astonished that Jaques did not follow.--The promise respecting Bertram filled all the Baron's thoughts,—every one that entered the hall, he turned hastily round, expecting the explanation, but night came on without its arrival, and the strangers retired.

Resolved to master his feelings on the subject, he forbore to mention Bertram, but his conduct to Fitz-Hugh wanted its usual warmth. At length the hour for all to retire to their chambers arrived, when Jaques and Hamet bid the baron good even, and Gregory, at the command of his master, having taken charge of the strangers, to see them well lodged, Fitz-Hugh said,—"Good night, my Lord, I intruded on you to day, without invitation, to dinner, I must do the same to-night for a lodging."

"Time has been, Fitz-Hugh," replied de Pointz, "that an invitation was unnecessary.

cessary. I regarded thee as myself, and cannot even yet forget the attachment; though I condemn, I pity thee. Thou art welcome, but I pray thee let me not see thy wife."

"You shall not, my Lord, till you yourself desire it.—My wife is engaged to-night, though I reluctantly spare her;—she doth not sleep, but watches with the almost distracted Bertram."

"With Bertram!" replied the baron, "fool that thou art, to encourage so disgraceful an acquaintance; thou art duped by their hypocrisy.—For thine own honour this marriage must be annulled."

"Never, my Lord.—Methinks you should have learned, in the long course of our friendship, to know me better, than to suppose me a tame pander, or the doating husband of a jilt. Fie, fie, I would not disgrace you by such suspicions."

"If

"If I wrong thee 'tis thine own fault,—good night."

"Good night, my Lord."—So saying, Fitz-Hugh left him, and the baron, after sitting some time busied in thought, called for a taper to light him to his chamber. Jonas was alone in the outward hall, and proud to be employed, immediately attended to await his pleasure.

"What dost thou here," said de Pointz, jeeringly, "thou bird of ill-omen, have I not forbidden thee to appear before me?"

"Aye, my gracious Lord; but your greatness forgives me, or you would not condescend to smile on your servant."

"Should I have done so; remember, that to retain my good will, thou must leave off thy hateful prying disposition, otherwise I forsake thee for ever."

"Good my Lord, I will take my oath before the altar,—nay, I will be bound to suffer

suffer death, if ever I meddle with any one's concerns but my own;—and for the pilgrim Bertram ——"

"When thou speakest of that youth," interrupted the baron, angrily, "remember to do it with the respect which befits my friend and thy master."

"I will, my Lord, most humbly, for Heaven knows he is born to honour; the saints smiled on his birth, or such a nobleman as your greatness, and the Knight Fitz-Hugh would not love him thus.—I bowed lowly to him to day, but I judge he saw me not, for his face was covered with his hood; yet I am convinced it was himself."

"Was't thou at chapel this morn?"

"No, my Lord, Gregory ordered me to brush your hose, and to carry them to your chamber: but as I crossed the gallery, I saw the pilgrim pass, supported on one side by

by the noble knight, and on the other by a young and beautiful lady, and, as I judged, the knight's bride."

"Begone," replied the baron, impatiently, "everlasting pryer."

"My Lord ——"

"Begone," said the baron, "I need thee not.—Dost thou not hear me?"

Jonas alarmed at the peremptory manner of the baron, immediately obeyed, and de Pointz again alone, Bertram employed all his thoughts.—"In my castle privately," said he, "impossible!—'tis a deception that Fitz-Hugh would never commit.—He would not dare bring his wanton wife into my dwelling, however he might presume on my partiality for Bertram."

As he reflected on the subject, Gregory entered, — "I await your commands, my Lord," said he, "would you please I should bear the taper to your chamber?"

"Not

"Not yet.—Hie thee first to the dame Cicely s apartment, and, if she be not retired to rest, request her to admit me for an half hour, as I wish to speak to her on business of import."

Gregory obeyed, and speedily returned, saying the dame awaited his orders; or, if it so pleased him, would attend in the hall.

"Not so," answered the baron, "thou mayest retire, Gregory, I will light myself to my chamber;" so speaking he dismissed his vassal, and repaired to the apartments of the dame.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER LIII.

DE POINTZ found Adnee and Cicely in apparent dejection, and after some casual discourse the latter rising, said,—"My Lord, with your permission, I will retire awhile;—your presence to-night was unexpected but welcome, as father la Roche has this dear maid's promise ——"

"He has," interrupted Adnee, "and I will not forfeit it; my all depends on the hazard, yet I must perforce obey."

As she spoke Cicely left the chamber, when the baron said,—"On my life, I shall talk to la Roche respecting both thee and the dame; I am convinced there are painful tasks enjoined to both.—I love to see thee pious, my sweet maid, but not a slave to priestcraft."

"La Roche loves me as a daughter, my Lord;—he wishes to see me act well."

"And thou dost act well," replied he, "la Roche hath forgotten the time when he was young. But think not of him, I wish to converse a few moments with thee; for thy sweet voice will harmonise my spirits, which are not quite in unison to-night."

"I grieve to hear it, and would I possessed the power you so flatteringly attribute to me."

"I do not flatter, Adnee," said he, "I account the few moments I pass with thee as

as the happiest of my life; therefore, thou ought in pity to shorten my probation, that such long absences may be done away. —I wish to see thee every hour, and to produce thee to my friends as the brightest gem I possess."

Adnee sighed.

"Nay I will not suffer this depression," continued he, "and to change the subject —I have spoken to thee of Bertram, he was at the service this morn, the promised pledge of honour in his hat;—yet have I not received an explanation respecting him."

"Do you wish it, my Lord?"

"Most sincerely.—So truly do I love him, that I would give ought but thee and mine honour to find him as I once thought."

"For a first offence I pray you judge him not too harshly."

"I cannot say it was his first offence, for he once, in Palestine, made me sincerely angry, by speaking, as I thought, coldly of Christabelle de Mowbray, whose manuscript he had perused; and which thou hast doubtless read, and, I am sure, will allow is written to touch the heart."

"I shed many tears over it, my Lord, but mine were interested tears; — the chronicles gave a very inadequate description of the feelings of the writer."

"I have often wished to be informed of every minute particular respecting her, but that I feared to awaken anew the grief of her friends. Hereafter, if thy spirits can bear to make the recital, thou wilt oblige me."

"Think you, my Lord, you could have loved her?"

"In faith I judge so, had I never seen thee," replied the baron; "for the world says

says she was fair, and of her understanding there can be no doubt."

"You speak partially, my Lord; but if you will give me your attention, I will endeavour to satisfy you of what you are unacquainted with, and much do I hope you may not alter your opinion respecting her."

The baron felt somewhat like displeasure with Adnee;—he had thought her above the meanness of envy, but before he could reply, she added,—"My Lord, far above my deserts, though I will not say above my wishes, you have deigned to honour me with your love.—I regard this as the most awful hour of my life, and, resolved to conquer a weakness which has hitherto plunged me in difficulties, to disclose the secret which has so long hung over me; a secret which must dye the cheek of modesty with blushes.—Yet it must be so,

for father la Roche will suffer no longer delay; and the Knight Fitz-Hugh, forgetful of his usual levity, joins his most earnest entreaties."

The baron alarmed at the energy of her manner, for the first time thought the secret she had to disclose of consequence. "Fitz-Hugh!" repeated he, "what is Fitz-Hugh to thee? — Thou canst not have deceived me, Adnee! — I conjure thee be candid, my soul is on the rack of impatience."

"First then, my Lord, remember no vows bind you; mine are sacred, and I must either be the honoured wife of Philip de Pointz, or espoused to a yet better and greater husband,—I mean Heaven."

For a moment her emotion choaked her voice. De Pointz, scarcely master of himself, caught her to his bosom; but withdrawing herself, she continued. — "My

"My story is complicate; and first 'tis necessary that I should relate some particulars which preceded, and likewise followed the death of your much honoured mother."

"My beloved," interrupted the baron, "interesting as that subject may be hereafter, now *thou* employest all my thoughts."

"Yet, my Lord, to elucidate the mystery I must begin as I say. Days, weeks, nay, months since did I resolve to disclose all; but my courage failed, and my heart sunk to confess myself a deceiver."

De Pointz started,—"Impossible!" cried he, "thou hast watched at St. Mary's till thy imagination is fevered; I pray thee, my love, let me call thy mother, that thou mayest retire to rest."

"Not so, my Lord, take my hand, no fever beguiles my brain.—My heart is cold,

but determined; and the Virgin support me through the trial."

The baron kissed her offered hand; which drawing from him, she continued,—"Yes, my Lord, I am a deceiver, a gross deceiver.—Bertram is a deceiver—and yet more truly, Christabelle de Mowbray is a deceiver!"

Convinced that her senses were deranged, the baron made an effort to rise to call assistance; but detaining him, she said,—"My Lord, I pray you think me not mad, you will render me incapable of what I have to execute. Sit, I entreat you, and suffer me to proceed without interruption."

In silent wonder the baron took his seat, and she continued.

"I need not tell you, my Lord, that it was one of the baroness's most ardent wishes to have made Christabelle de Mowbray your wife. With the tenderness of a

a parent she excused every omission you were guilty of; and placed it to, as I should judge, its true source, the commands of your father. By the care of the Baron Falconberg, and the wealth of Mary la Pole, the estates of Mowbray were cleared; yet she thought them not sufficient for her adopted child, but with generous cruelty, added the noble domain of Latimer by her last testament. Her verbal commands, or rather requests, were many; among them, that Christabelle should regard la Roche as a parent, he truly loving her as such.—That should Philip de Pointz hereafter offer the orphan his heart, she should not without mature consideration refuse him. — And lastly, she requested, that a censer of pure gold, and curiously wrought, should be presented to the blessed patron of St. John's chapel, as a memorial, to pray for the soul of Robert de Mowbray;

which gift was to be presented without the name of the donor, and the messenger to be selected by la Roche."

The recollection of the censer presented by Bertram, immediately struck the baron, and filled him with astonishment. He almost thought himself beguiled by witchcraft; but finding the maid paused, he said,—"Though I am grieved to exhaust you thus, yet I candidly confess my every faculty is absorbed in wonder. I pray you hath the gift been sent?"

"Aye, my Lord, by the last crusaders. Bertram bore it; and all praise be to the Virgin, whose holy spirit directed the deed. Philip de Pointz shared in the offering."

"I surely dream!—How knowest thou that?"

"Patience, my gracious Lord, and you shall hear all;—deceit is at an end, let what will befal. At the altar you swore to

to love Bertram,—I pray ye forget not the oath."

"Never!" said the baron. "His own deception (for from what I hear thou doubtless knowest more) forced me to throw him from me, though my heart bled to make the effort."

"I do indeed know all that passed in Palestine; but to resume my narrative.—At the death of the baroness—oh, the remembrance will ever rack my heart!—bereft of all, the unhappy Christabelle gave way to the most wild and sinful despair; which as her strength failed, sunk into a melancholy which admitted of no alleviation, but in the thought of devoting her days to Heaven. La Roche and her friends trembled for her senses; and much against their better judgment, yielded to caprices which they were fearful to contradict, lest her reason should be entirely lost;

lost. Amongst all, nothing distressed her more than the bequest of the domain of Latimer, and that she should appear before the baron, at once as the usurper of his right, and the woman whom the baroness would have forced on his acceptance."

"By my soul," interrupted the baron, "she wronged me; I was gratified by my mother's generosity, and wrote to her to that purport."

—"I know it, my Lord; but that letter at once determined her.—She insisted on being permitted to enter on her noviciate at St. Mary's; but la Roche peremptorily refused, until she should attain the age of twenty-five. The news of your speedy arrival, the refusal of la Roche, the declining state of her health, all conspired to overwhelm her, and a fever of the most dangerous nature ensued; previous to which she had, however, written a testament,

ment, in which she arranged all her worldly affairs to her wishes.

"In this state, lingering on the verge of life, she dreaded more than death itself the sight of Philip de Pointz; and la Roche, who considered her recovery impossible, at length gave a reluctant consent that she should be removed into the convent. Contrary to expectation, she after some days appeared better; but it was clearly visible, that yielding to her desires had alone produced the change.

"A relapse of fever succeeded this respite; and in a paroxysm of which, Christabelle lay without any appearance of life for more than three hours, during which the news of her death was carried to the castle, and from thence spread abroad. She, however, awoke as it were from this transitory death with collected reason, and gathering from the nuns what had passed,

she

she conjured la Roche, as he valued her soul's peace, not to contradict the report that had gone forth, but as she was in reality dead to the world, to let her from that moment be considered so; as that would leave her mind free, and the baron would enjoy his right, and bear her good will for the proof she had given of her wish to do him justice."

"Good Heaven! thy account distracts me," said the baron. "How could she form such an unjust opinion of me?—But I pray you, sweet Adnee, proceed."

"La Roche, who considered her recovery as impossible, first consulted with the Abbess of St. Mary's, and the superior of the monastery who at length gave consent to her desires.—She, however, was not satisfied without his oath, and thus her death remained uncontradicted, while in reality she

she daily, though by very slow degrees, gained strength."

"When did she die then?" exclaimed the baron, "thy secrets are indeed wonderful, and I no longer am astonished they weighed heavy on thy mind."

"Patience, my Lord, as methodically as I can, I will relate all.—Christabelle somewhat recovered, la Roche, though with gentleness, requested her to absolve him from the oath he had taken, but she peremptorily refused; and though the abbess and the superior of the fathers joined in the demand, she persevered, and they in consequence were obliged to submit in silence. Le Val, dame Cicely, and her daughter," continued she, blushing deeply and turning aside, "were devoted to Christabelle, and readily yielded to her wishes, particularly as they judged that humouring her

her caprices was the only means to save her life."

"Sweet Adnee why that blush?—her secrets were so sacred, that I honour thee for keeping them," said the baron.

"Thus was she situated, when you, my Lord, first came to Latimer ——"

The baron started from his seat,—"Gracious Heaven," exclaimed he, "when I first came to Latimer!—Noble, generous girl!—and I not suffered to see her, to undeceive her, to shew her how much I respected her!—All but this I could have pardoned."

The baron's head sunk on his bosom, and he resumed his place in silence, and Adnee continued:—

"However Christabelle had dreaded to meet the baron, yet, now safe from being known, she ardently wished to see him.—On every side she heard his praises, la Roche

Roche spoke of him in raptures;—the concern he had expressed for her death, his respect for his mother, all dwelt on her mind, and gave a new turn to her thoughts, yet she refused, as firmly as before, to suffer it to be disclosed, that the report of her death was false. Her chronicles, in the haste to leave the castle, had, without design, been left behind; but dame Cicely, who ardently longed to interest you in her favour, placed them where she had no doubt they would meet your eyes, and, for that purpose, left the key in the amber cabinet. The plan succeeded to her wishes, and how shall I describe my joy when she informed me ———. Pardon me, my Lord,—Christabelle, however grateful, could not destroy an illusion so flattering to her, as to break at once on your favourable opinion, by confessing that she had used deception in the report of her death.

death. You visited the convent,—there, my Lord, she saw you, when you attended a public mass for the souls of your parents; and afterwards, as you thought unseen by mortal eye, she saw you in pious privacy, kneel on your sainted mother's tomb, and offer a yet more acceptable prayer, that of a virtuous son for an exemplary parent.—Nay, my Lord, interrupt me not, give me your hearing; from that hour, may I avow it, and maidenly modesty not prevent the confession, Christabelle de Mowbray loved you."

"Loved me!" repeated the baron, "impossible Adnee! yet I love thee too well to think thou canst jest on such a subject."

"Far from dissuading her affection," resumed she, "la Roche expressed satisfaction at the event, when she could no longer conceal it; for how, my Lord, was that to be done, when after having seen you daily,

and

and daily heard of your virtues, she was informed of your intended departure for Palestine?—The fate of her father, in that hateful country, appeared to her wounded fancy to be preparing for you, and rest again forsook her. La Roche argued and soothed her by turns, and nothing less than his oath and her persevering obstinacy could have prevented your being informed of all. The good father declared, he thought your intended voyage the inspiration of Heaven, as you had, in your sleep, received a peculiar warning to that purpose. In short, my Lord, to the grief of all your vassals, you left the castle, and Christabelle again sunk into a state of despondency.—Afraid to avow her wishes, she concealed them in her own bosom, till preying on her health, la Roche, as her friend and confessor, discovered the secret. By gentleness he learned the extent of her folly, and shame

to

to say, that the baron had stolen her thoughts from Heaven, and that her most ardent wish was to accompany his escort into Palestine. Two of the aged priests had been appointed to take charge of the golden censer, and to attend the knights and pilgrims. Ah, my Lord, you will blush for the unhappy girl, when I inform you, that persuasions, tears, and all were useless; beguiled by an affection which appeared interwoven with her existence, she forgot her rank, her honour, and maidenly modesty, and assuming a male habit joined the crusaders in France."

"Oh, Adnee," interrupted the baron, "for pity say if she still lives?—It must be the study of our lives to make her happy, for never can my heart know peace unless she be so."

"Again, my Lord, I pray your patience," replied she, "the fathers, though perforce they

they yielded to her inclination, were careful of her safety; the two priests who were appointed to bear the censer, were to superintend her conduct without pleading acquaintance.—She bore with her, recommendations to the priests of St. John's, to whom she disclosed her sex.—I tremble now, my Lord, to proceed;—the trusty John le Val attended her, disguised as her relation, and a maid, timid as a fawn, and pure as the mountain snow, assumed the same habit as herself, to bear her company, and who is now the wife of Fitz-Hugh."

The baron for some moments was unable to reply, at length he exclaimed,—"Is it possible, that in the beloved Bertram I saw Christabelle de Mowbray?—Beguiled that I was, yet a thousand circumstances tend to give probability to the assertion.—The delicacy of person, the uncommon beauty of features, the trembling timidity which at times

times could not be concealed, the Saracen complexion which she doubtless inherited from Hamet,—But I pray you, sweet maid, continue, my curiosity defeats itself."

"You have truly judged, my Lord. In Bertram you saw Christabelle de Mowbray, who first caught your attention in crossing the desert, where she purchased her chronicles from Jonas. Judge how much she was gratified to hear your concern for the loss, and resolving to attract your attention, she suppressed her feelings and assumed a character which she trembled to support.—Judge her satisfaction on your assisting to present the censer, which the priests had yielded to her, as having the nearest right.—Judge her rapture on receiving your vow at the altar,—and yet more, judge how powerful her affection must be, when it could prompt her to forget the weakness of her

her sex, and plunge a poniard in the villain's side who attempted your life."

"Recal not my obligations to my memory;—would to Heaven that not only the surrender of the domain of Latimer, but of my whole wealth, could repay them!—But I pray proceed."

"In Palestine, my Lord, she lived in perpetual fear of discovery, and when Hamet joined the Christians, and claimed their protection, judge what she endured, not to acknowledge herself his niece."

"Heaven inspired," said the baron, "she first directed his thoughts to Christianity;—unknown he loved her, as we indeed all did."

"On her arrival in England, the fears of her female friend discovered her sex to the Knight Fitz-Hugh, who, after the first surprise and levity of the moment, nobly and disinterestedly came forward to offer them

them his protection; but overhearing a discourse which he judged meant to beguile either himself or you, or perhaps both, he forgot his purpose, and threatened to reveal the purport to you. Though he was in reality deceived, and afterwards acknowledged it, yet however his violence at the moment overcame *us*; and obtaining his oath of secresy, *I* revealed all. His surprise surpassed description, he swore to devote himself to promote the happiness of the baron and Christabelle; and in return, pledged his faith to her companion, whom he hath since wedded. You now know all, my Lord; except, that I had forgotten to inform you, that the complexion of Christabelle, like her habit, was assumed, and that by nature she is fair as myself."

Adnee turned aside; the baron made no reply, but appeared lost in thought, until she

she resumed,—"And now, my Lord, how shall I soften your anger, how procure the pardon of John le Val, of dame Cicely, and the wife of Fitz-Hugh, for their share in the deception?"

"I pardon all but thee," answered the baron, after a long pause, during which Adnee with difficulty sustained his ardent gaze. "But thee how can I pardon, for thou hast greatly wronged me, thou hast thought me unjust, ungenerous, tyrannical, and barbarous?"

"Oh, my Lord, I cannot bear your displeasure!"

"Nay, interrupt me not, I take shame to myself for having been thus long deceived; but thou shalt make the expiation. Whisper to the ear of Christabelle, for doubtless thou knowest where to find her, that the heart of de Pointz is her's for ever, nor time nor chance can alter my

love; nay, so dear to me is all that appertains to her, that I could almost grieve to give up her Saracen complexion. Nay, Adnee, my love, why dost thou tremble and turn pale?" said he, kissing her hand. "I will keep my faith to thee, and yet, if the fair Christabelle consents, pledge to her my everlasting truth."

"Oh, my Lord!" replied she, casting down her eyes, "I see all my duplicity is discovered, and dare not meet the eye of one I have so grossly deceived. On your lips hang my fate; whatever it may be, I shall confess its justice, for how can you place faith in such a dissembler, such a Proteus, one that hath broken through all those bounds that should restrain her sex, and dared———"

"Beloved Christabelle, Bertram, Adnee, or what name thou wilt, what pains thou hast taken to gain a heart that was thine from

from the first moment I saw thee—nay, that was thine from the perusal of thy Chronicles. How I detest myself for being so stupid; a thousand circumstances ought to have discovered thee to me, yet, fool that I was, I even did not suspect thee till nearly the conclusion of thy narrative. Thy astonishing resemblance to Bertram struck me even at our first meeting; but how could I expect to meet him here?—Thy voice also penetrated my heart; but sweet as I thought that of Bertram, I fancied thine still more melodious."

"Indeed, my Lord, all were innocent deceivers but myself; and if you pardon me, they must stand excused."

"They are already so. I blush to think how unworthily I have treated the wife of Fitz-Hugh, and will make every expiation in my power. She is, I judge, the true Adnee, and the daughter of le Val."

"Even so, my Lord. Neither Cicely nor le Val, will dare to see you; the first declares you can never pardon her, and the second remembers your anger against Maynard."

"In truth, and so do I; but the fault was all thine. Say, my sweet Bertram, for such I will often name thee in pure spite, what can'st *thou* offer to obtain my forgiveness?"

"The duty of my whole life, my Lord, if you deign to grant it.—Christabelle de Mowbray will be the honoured wife of Philip de Pointz—Bertram will be his true friend and companion, the sharer of his dangers and his pleasures—and Adnee will never forget the obligation which she owes him, for raising her to be mistress of his heart, and partner of his honours."

"Fascinating, bewitching maid! though I long to share my happiness with my friends,

friends, yet I cannot now spare time.—Hamet will be wild with joy at this news."

"You know not, my Lord, nor have I words to describe what it has cost me to conceal myself from him, particularly when he expressed such kind intentions to my mother and myself.—But the night is far spent, and within the further chambers I have companions."

"Indeed!—then thou shalt introduce me to them, for I cannot yet leave thee; an hour more of my company is one of the first penances I enjoin thee."

"I submit. My heart is relieved of a weight that pressed it almost to death; last night I passed in entreating strength to bear me through this awful trial, and thanks be to the Virgin, it hath been granted. The kind Knight Fitz-Hugh has spared the gentle Adnee to me, for which I owe him great thanks."

"Now I remember," replied the baron, "that he said his Adnee was engaged to pass the night in comforting Bertram. I pray thee entreat her pardon for me."

"I will, my Lord," said Christabelle.—"But I have yet much to inform you of; for I wish now to declare all, that hereafter I may endeavour to forget the ungrateful subject. I have already told you, that my father's domains have long been free, they had also from my minority accumulated; and your beloved mother's care had laid by some large sums, but of these I spent considerably in Palestine. The humble dress I assumed, I considered as less likely to attract notice; and my complexion and hair dyed by a vegetable extract, which my grandmother's aged companion, Malka, prepared for me, and who I grieve to say I found dead on my return, compleated the deception."

De

De Pointz held her hand.—Blest with the love of the woman he adored, his happiness appeared almost too great to be real. That he could now produce her to the world, at once as his wife and equal in rank, gave him supreme delight; but even those reflections were secondary to the rapture inspired by knowing himself so tenderly beloved.

"Christabelle," said he, "even now that I hold thee, and see thee thus lovely and safe in thy own castle, I shudder for thy past danger. How, my love, didst thou perform thy long journey, after my ridiculous folly had driven thee from me on our first landing?—In faith, my virtue, as Fitz-Hugh once told me, was over-strained; but I regarded the sweet Bertram as a model of perfection, and could not bear the thought of being mistaken."

"Name it not, my Lord.—At first the discovery shocked me severely, but on consideration I was not sorry for an excuse to leave you. Fitz-Hugh's discovery somewhat disconcerted our plan, but his word given, I had no doubt of his honour.—Maynard, or rather le Val, bought us horses, and engaged two guides to attend us to Auckland, where he paid them and they returned. From thence dame Cicely was apprised of our arrival, and used means to admit us privately into the castle at night, where we found la Roche ready to receive us. He embraced me, thanked Heaven for my safety, and condemned me by turns; but as all hitherto had turned out to my wishes, he consented to leave me free for a time, except that I should resume my natural habit. Le Val, as you were truly told, repaired to the domain of de Mowbray, and Adnee and myself remained concealed

concealed in the apartments of Cicely, who, after a few days, in the presence of la Roche, informed some of the most ancient vassals that I was living, but claimed their oath of secresy till I should command otherwise; and that in the mean time I should pass as her daughter.

"To all but these, my Lord, I have been concealed, rarely venturing from my chamber, but when assured I might do it with safety; and even only attending prayer when there was no fear of my being recognized. The arrival of Jaques and Hamet at the castle, though expected, alarmed me, and I carefully avoided them, till one day they surprised me at the chapel. Both gazed on me in a manner to awaken my alarm, but after a few moments the impression appeared to cease. On your wished, yet dreaded arrival, I was undetermined how to act;—I knew I possessed your friendship,

but, pardon me," added she, turning aside, "I wished to possess your heart."

De Pointz kissed her hand in silent rapture, and she continued,—"Fitz-Hugh, on your arrival, speedily discovered the dame's chambers, he at once pleaded his own suit and your's. He urged me, as I would not discover the deceit I had used, at least to meet you, as if by accident. I could not, however, resolve, and the evening I first saw you in the park, he had beguiled Cicely and myself thither, by saying you were gone some miles. Oh, my Lord, I cannot describe my agitation at that moment; it was evident that you considered me as an exact resemblance of Bertram, and had not that meeting been speedily concluded, my weakness had discovered all. Fitz-Hugh declared you loved me, and may I confess I nourished the flattering idea, till you proposed the knight,

knight, and afterwards the Lord Villeneuf. Then, my Lord, all my fears returned; I considered myself as indifferent to you, and reflecting on my imprudence my feelings preyed upon my health."

"My beloved," said the baron, "thou knowest not the torture I endured the night I rushed into thy chamber. I was not master of myself, I considered thee the wife of Fitz-Hugh, and though I before thought I could yield thee to him, I felt how vain had been that resolution."

"Fitz-Hugh was at every opportunity urging his suit to Adnee, by Cicely he received le Val's approbation to espouse her; and she, I truly believe, the more readily consented to a hasty marriage, as she considered, that deprived of her company, I should the more speedily act as my friends wished.

"After

"After that night in which you, my Lord, so unexpectedly entered my chamber, my proud exulting heart had no doubt, nor any fear, but that my duplicity might appear so hateful to you, as to estrange your affections. Thus situated, la Roche had no longer patience with me; he insisted that I should throw off all disguise.—Cicely and Adnee intreated, and Fitz-Hugh prayed and scolded by turns, and two days since took a measure which he was assured would reduce me to obedience. He swore by the Holy Virgin, that if I did not in three days reveal all to you, that he would, with his wife, retire to Normandy; a step which must materially injure his future prospects, as it would deprive him of your friendship and protection."

"Poor Fitz-Hugh," said de Pointz, "I can never recompense him, and will therefore intrust his reward to Bertram."

"Nay,

"Nay, my Lord."

"Nay, Christabelle, or Bertram, or Adnee, in all characters equally beloved, it must be so. Hast thou not, with that blushing cheek and modest downcast eye, seduced his bride?—In faith, thou ought to make him amends for the sake of thy old love."

"My Lord, I pray you do not jest on this hateful subject; my heart is laid before you, and I pray you judge it with as much pity as honour will allow."

"My beloved maid," replied he, clasping her to his bosom, "I am but mortal; yet thy sweet voice will always force me to remember those decorums which thy beauty might otherwise make me forget."

"I told you, my Lord, I had friends within," said she, rising, "shall I call them to receive your pardon?"

"Thou

"Thou shalt first give me thine.—Angels virtuous as thyself render thee sacred. — Call thy friends — the whole world,—they can but witness what I shall glory to avow."

Christabelle left the apartment, and in a few moments returned with Cicely and the wife of Fitz-Hugh, who threw themselves at the baron's feet; but raising them, he saluted both.—"My good friends," said he, "I am too happy to remember what these concealments have made me suffer; my lovely friend here might have saved me a journey to Palestine, and herself much toil and danger."

"Oh, my Lord," said Cicely, "I feel you can never pardon the deception which hath been used."

"I have no time for ought but joy," replied de Pointz, "but when, I pray ye, may we expect le Val?"

"Daily,

"Daily, my Lord."

"I pray you, where was he when I first came to Latimer?"

"Truly, as was said, my Lord, collecting the revenues of the estates of de Mowbray, at the request of father la Roche," replied Christabelle;—"but on my determination to accompany the pilgrims to Palestine, the friar selected him to attend me, with his daughter Adnee, who with unwearied kindness had accompanied me to the convent, and vowed to take the holy habit also, if such was my resolution."

"Thank Heaven that hasty step was not adopted," said de Pointz; "in faith, sweet dame Fitz-Hugh, I owe you a debt which I never can sufficiently repay."

"I am greatly repaid, my Lord," replied she; "do I not see my noble mistress happy in the affections of the only man that can make her so?—I also am happy in having

having gained the love of the brave knight, whom you truly name your friend."

"Gentle lady," replied de Pointz, "I have many apologies to make to you; but I pray ye, place all my demerits to the score of Bertram.—And now," added he, "late as it is, I cannot resolve to leave you, but as the first tribute I can make Fitz-Hugh, will call him up to share my satisfaction.—Hamet too, and Jaques will both rejoice at my happiness; the first will forget Selima in the pleasure of finding such a niece."

"My Lord," answered Christabelle, "to-morrow I will meet all, but to night I am unable.—Indeed I have falsely said to-night, for the streaks of day enlighten the horizon."

"Pardon me, sweet maid, but in my happiness I selfishly forgot your fatigue; promise me to retire to rest, and however painful, I will tear myself away."

"I

"I will, my Lord, good night."

"Angels guard thee!" replied he, kissing her hand; "dearly as I love thee, I feel anger against thee for robbing me of so much happiness as our long and tedious voyage to Palestine has deprived me of.—Knowest thou not that life is short, and 'tis imprudent to leave good actions to the hazard."

"Good actions, my Lord!"

"Aye, Christabelle.—Is it not a good and virtuous action to give thyself to the man whom thy dearest friends approve?"

"And yet, I shame to say, more approved by my froward heart," replied she. "I pray ye remember it not, hereafter to my disadvantage."

"Methought," interrupted the dame Fitz-Hugh, smiling, "that you, my Lord, were going, that the Lady Christabelle might

might retire to rest, I think you have forgotten it."

"In faith I had, sweet Alan, but I am gone,—good night.—Dear dame," added he, addressing Cicely, "I once hoped to call you mother, but though that may not be, I will ever consider you as such;" so saying, he snatched a hasty kiss from the hand of Christabelle and left the apartment.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER LIV.

THE baron was too happy to sleep.—What had passed appeared almost too strange to be real, and crossing the castle, he repaired to the apartment of Fitz-Hugh.—The knight was in a sound sleep, but de Pointz awakened him by a hearty shake,—"Rouse, thou secret-keeper," exclaimed he, "the smallest atonement thou canst make for thy part in the deception that has been used towards me, is to share in my

my watching, for by my life I cannot sleep."

Fitz-Hugh, hastily awakened, heard but imperfectly the words of the baron, and starting up, he replied, gazing around,— "My Lord, why call ye thus early?—Is all well throughout the castle?"

"Nay, I know not," answered de Pointz, observing his absence, "I have caught thy wife secreted in one of my apartments, and have claimed the forfeiture of her intrusion. In faith thou hast a good taste, her brow is polished ivory, and her lips are coral."

Fitz-Hugh leaped from his couch,— "Claimed the forfeiture!" repeated he, "accursed be the man who shall dare to affront my wife!—By my soul, not the king himself should do it with impunity."

De Pointz laughed, —"In faith the fault would be in thyself.—Art thou not a gallant fellow to be snoring here, while such

a

a girl is watching?—Out upon thee, if thou art not hereafter a cuckold, thou wilt have better fortune than appertains to thy deserts."

Fitz Hugh, by the baron's manner was convinced he jested.—"My Lord," said he quickly, "I care not what I be;—yet that is a lie too, for cuckoldom would sit most cursedly hard on my stomach.—Have ye seen Bertram?"

"What's that to thee?—Put on thy hose and cloak, and come away."

"Nay, then, ye have seen him, and he hath revealed all."

"No, but *she* hath," replied the baron. But before he could proceed, Fitz-Hugh interrupted him with an exclamation of joy, and with one leg covered, and the other bare, danced round the chamber in a transport; then throwing his arms round the baron's neck, he said,—"Tell me all,

or

or I shall go mad!—Say, am I free from that devilish promise, which has been heavier on my conscience than the fears of purgatory?"

"Aye, thou art free, if the little Proteus can make thee so.—Marry, thou and I are noble fellows, to be so long and so grossly deceived."

"Nay, by St. Mary, we were but deceived by halves, for though our eyes were deluded, the instinctive power of nature taught us better; else how came we to love the saucy varlets?—But say, my Lord, doth Jaques and Hamet know the discovery?"

"No, but we will greet them with it on their rising. In the mean time come away, we will to St. Mary's,—we shall find la Roche, whom I wish to see, at the first morning prayer."

Fitz-

Fitz-Hugh hastily put on his cloaths, and accompanied the baron; who had neither words nor thoughts for ought but his beloved Christabelle.

"By my soul, Fitz-Hugh," said he, "I feel more in favour with myself than ever I did before.—To be beloved by such a woman, to have received such proofs of her affection; my life, though prolonged beyond the age of man, will be too short to testify my gratitude, and all my endeavours for her happiness, too poor to shew my affection."

He then, as well as his satisfaction would permit, related the manner in which she had discovered herself.

"In disclosing the secret," added he, "she was frequently confused; and I observed at almost the beginning of her relation, speaking of Christabelle, she said *I*, though at that moment it struck me as nothing

nothing particular.—Near the conclusion she again forgot herself; and as a veil then suddenly torn from my face, the whole truth rushed at once on my soul, and I wondered at my former stupidity. For a moment I wished to punish the flattering beloved deceiver, and to preserve the appearance of ignorance, but one look put my resolution to flight."

Thus conversing they reached the monastery, where, as they expected, they found the fathers at matins. Waiting till they had concluded their devotions, they approached la Roche.

"Give you good morning, father," said the baron; "I have words for your private ear, if you be at leisure."

"I am," replied la Roche, leaving the chapel, "what I pray ye may they be?"

"Father," replied de Pointz, "I have just learned, that my mother left behind her

her a jewel, richer than the whole domain of Latimer, nay, richer than the accumulated wealth of Falconberg and de Pointz could purchase—that you, in concert with others, have assisted in concealing this treasure from me.—How say you, is it so?"

"Of what species was this jewel, my Lord?" replied the friar, "be explicit, and I will truly answer."

"Of the nature to constitute the happiness of my whole life; and without the possession of which, I must, now once known, be miserable.—A maid, father, pure as the distillation of Heaven's own dew on the rose bud; and designed by Providence, I trust, to bless the happy de Pointz."

"The Virgin be praised!" ejaculated la Roche, "I trust all is discovered; and my soul freed from a weight which hath

almost sunk my grey hairs with vexation to the grave."

"Aye, father," said Fitz-Hugh, "all concealment is at an end; our beloved pilgrim hath put off the doublet, and resumed the kirtle."

"Are Jaques and Hamet acquainted with the disclosure?" said the friar.

"Not yet, father," replied de Pointz; "gladsome as the tidings would be to both, I would not awaken them thus untimely."

"I will, so please you, return with you to the castle," said la Roche. "Lose no time in making them sharers in your satisfaction. For me, I truly confess this business hath vexed me almost to death. —What I suffered before I consented to the imposture—my feelings for her danger while absent—and her obstinacy in not disclosing

disclosing herself since her return, have severely tried my patience."

"Aye, father," said Fitz-Hugh, "but after all my method was better than your's; you tried persuasion and reasoning — I blustering and threats, and they forced the promise from her."

"As thou knewest her sex when we separated in Cornwall," said the baron, "how could'st thou, Fitz-Hugh, leave her to all the dangers of that long and perilous journey?"

"Marry, because I could not help it.— Was I not sworn to secresy? though, in faith, I had much ado to keep it; besides, though she went from our escort with only le Val and Adnee, yet the former assured me, he had engaged two guides to attend them the whole way to Durham. When I accompanied you to the castle, you may remember my anxiety to converse with

dame Cicely. I wished to be informed of their welfare, to see the Lady Christabelle; and yet more my own varlet, to whom I had pledged my faith at Penzance, before her father and the Lady Christabelle. Assured of their safety, I next visited this good father, whom I intreated to join in pressing the Lady Christabelle to disclose herself; but finding that impossible, I wished you to see her as Adnee, and succeeded to my utmost wishes. Still doubting, prayers were vain; and I prevailed on my more docile pupil to give me her hand, if it were only for the sake of a good example. Dame Cicely gave us her blessing, we had before the consent of le Val, and we repaired to Auckland, where we were wedded; but where that prying imp, Jonas, had like to have discovered all. In faith, when I first heard it, I wished him in the whale's belly like his namesake."

"I

"I know not but in the anger of the moment, whether I did not wish him even worse," replied the baron, "but am now satisfied his discovery was productive of good; as it made my beloved Christabelle known to me, and forced me to throw off all disguise to her, and offer her a hand and heart, uninfluenced by either her rank, birth, or the commands of my mother,—and though I am grieved at the dangers she hath undergone, I rejoice that she is at length convinced I loved her for herself alone."

On reaching the castle, the friar said,—"With your permission, while you awaken Hamet, and relate this good news, I will perform the same to Jaques."

"Do so," answered the baron, "though less interested, I am convinced he will equally rejoice; — he loved Bertram, and

my sweet Christabelle will not, I trust, be less dear to him."

Thus saying they separated, de Pointz and Fitz-Hugh repairing to the apartment of Hamet, and la Roche to that of Jaques.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER LV.

THE baron and the knight striking gently at the door of Hamet's chamber, he bid them enter. The salutation of the morning having passed, the first speedily informed him of what had transpired; and though the Saracen expressed joy at the relation, the high wrought rapture of de Pointz considered his surprize and satisfaction as coldly declared. "My friend,"

said he, " you disappoint me.—I expected your joy to be nearly equal to mine ;—my Christabelle's only relation, *my* friend, and our mutual father, for such we will both ever regard you, your consent is necessary to complete our happiness.—Will you not bestow your blessing on our union ?"

" Aye, my Lord," answered Hamet, " and with it worlds, did I possess them.—But remember, I am not in love, my utmost wish is to pass the days allotted me by Heaven in your society, in that of Jaques, and our dear Bertram, for as such I first loved my sweet niece. — To grow old among your children, should the saints so bless you, and contemplate in their smiling innocence, what perhaps my own might have been, had not villany and lust deprived me of my Selima."

He then enquired whether Jaques was apprised of the discovery which had taken place,

place, and being informed that la Roche was with him for that purpose, he hastily dressed himself, and accompanied them to the hall, where the friar and the veteran speedily joined them.

Whether it was that the love of Christabelle had transported the baron to more than common rapture, in which the warm and sanguine temper of Fitz-Hugh amply shared, or that the passions of Jaques and Hamet were calmed by suffering and time, certain it is, that both the baron and the knight felt disappointed in their calm reception of the intelligence they communicated. Jaques, indeed, congratulated the baron, but he bid him examine his own heart, whether his father would have approved an union between himself and the daughter of Robert de Mowbray.

"Perhaps not," replied the baron, with some warmth,—"but my happiness, not

my father's is now my first concern; his, I trust, is beyond worldly events to disturb. I am no visionary, or perhaps I might go farther;—in this castle, as la Roche can inform you, I had a dream, which impelled me to journey to Palestine.—My father, methought, appeared before me, and commanded me to take that voyage, as *there* I should fulfil his desires.—In that country could I expect to meet the daughter of de Mowbray?—or yet more, her worthy uncle, Hamet?—Surely not, therefore, I will consider the warning as prophetic, and that death, which extinguishes all animosity, hath, or will unite my honoured father, and the valiant Robert, their souls cleansed from mortal sin, in everlasting friendship."

"Amen, Amen!" replied Jaques, "the saints grant it."

La Roche crossed himself and said,—"Praise be to Heaven, all is well.—To give

give my opinion, the attachment of the baron and the Lady Christabelle is the work of Providence, who from old animosity hath produced young love.—The houses of de Pointz and de Mowbray united and blended into one, who will remember they ever were foes?"

"Not I, by my life, father," said de Pointz.—"Neither will, I am sure, my gentle and pious Christabelle."

The conversation was pursued for some time longer, and at length broken by the entrance of the vassals with breakfast, which though served was scarcely touched; so much were the thoughts of all employed respecting what had passed.

On the board being removed, de Pointz said,—"I have the promise of my beloved to meet my friends to-day,—I pray ye, dear Jaques, increase not her timidity by your scrutinizing looks. She says she loves

and

and honours you, but at the same time confesses these sentiments are mingled with fear."

"I will observe," answered Jaques, "though in truth she wrongs me; for though I sincerely loved Bertram, I shall love Christabelle yet better."

"I thank you," replied the baron, "and will presently intreat her, and the dame Fitz-Hugh, with her mother, to favour us with their company in the hall; they were up till the dawn of day, and I will not yet have them disturbed."

After walking for an hour in the environs of the castle, they again returned to the hall, when the baron, accompanied by Fitz-Hugh, repaired to the apartments of dame Cicely, and on being admitted, found not only all risen, but expecting them. The baron respectfully kissed the hand of Christabelle, while the knight, with an arch smile

smile saluted the lips of his gentle Adnee, saying, in a whisper to de Pointz,—" See the superiority of married men to bachelors, you dare not presume so much for an hundred marks."

" I would not now hazard the trial for ten times the sum," answered the baron, in the same tone.—" But say, my beloved friend," addressing Christabelle, " may I, without offence, claim your promise of meeting my friends, who anxiously wish to express their satisfaction on this happy event?"

" I have no will but your's, my Lord; your affection will enable me to bear what I should otherwise sink under."

So speaking, she gave her hand to the baron, who led her to the hall, followed by dame Cicely, and the Knight Fitz-Hugh leading his bride.

Her

Her hand trembled within the baron's as they reached the door,—" My Christabelle, why this tremor?" said he, " art thou not within thine own castle, and thy most faithful vassal by thy side?"

Christabelle made no reply but entered the hall.—Jaques with la Roche, was in earnest discourse at the upper end.—Hamet flew to receive her, when falling at his feet she clasped his knees.—" Beloved dear child," exclaimed he, raising her, " thou must and shall be all to me!—To thee what do I not owe—under Heaven, I trust, my immortal soul!"

Christabelle pressed his hand to her lips, —" Oh, my good, my gracious uncle," said she, " how have I wished yet dreaded the time, when I might claim our relationship, and with what joy shall I pay the debt of love and duty I owe you."

As

As she spoke la Roche advanced with Jaques. Both were silent, but the manly and expressive face of the veteran was an index of the conflicting passions that struggled within his heart.—Christabelle, scarcely sensible of the action, disengaged herself from the arms of Hamet, and rushing forward, by an involuntary motion threw herself on the bosom of Jaques.—"Oh, my noble, my dear friend," exclaimed she, "I see the honour of your nature recoils at the deception I have used; but I pray you, pardon a folly which it shall be the business of my life to erase from the memory of all my friends.—Let me, I conjure you, be unto you as a daughter; for I feel, that without your affection there must ever be a void in my heart!"

Jaques pressed her to his bosom, he endeavoured to bless her, but his feelings were too great for words, and the man who had,

had, with undaunted firmness, borne cold, hunger, slavery, and all the accumulated evils of life, burst into a flood of tears.

Astonished at his emotion, de Pointz took her hand and endeavoured to remove her, but clasping her closer, he at length exclaimed, regardless of the effort,—"Spirits of peace and blessedness, may ye be permitted to witness this hour!—My sad soul is satisfied, and now languishes to burst from its earthly bonds, and join you in everlasting harmony!"

De Pointz, Fitz-Hugh, Cicely, and Adnee gazed on him with astonishment, they trembled for his reason; but Christabelle, who shared his emotion too much to notice the strangeness of his manner, replied,—"My noble friend, may my prayers ascend to Heaven with your's, that the blessed spirits who interest themselves for our mortal welfare, may witness this meeting.

meeting.—May they also enable you to bear those evils which have no worldly remedy, with resignation; and if ye have no nearer or dearer claim, may they transfer your dormant affection to Christabelle, who will make it the second duty of her life to return it."

Jaques struggled to overcome his emotion, he gently released Christabelle from his embrace, he emphatically blessed her, and turning to la Roche and Hamet, he said,—"Am I a man, and act thus?—I pray ye excuse my weakness, I have not resolution; I will go forth, in an hour I shall be more myself."

"Take my arm," said de Pointz, "and, dear Jaques, I conjure ye struggle to overcome this sorrow, which must, if yielded to, destroy your life."

"I pray your pardon, but my emotion was involuntary.—Tarry, I beseech you, with

with Christabelle; our friends, la Roche and Harnet will walk with me, their converse will assist in calming my spirits."

So speaking he quitted the hall, leaning on the arm of the friar, and followed by the Saracen.

Christabelle's eyes overflowed with tears, which she in vain strove to repress,—"Thus it is," said she, "with thankless erring mortality.—Arrived at the height of my most anxious wishes, even yet I am unsatisfied;—the distress of the noble Jaques damps my happiness, and, in spite of my endeavours, preys upon my spirits and sickens me at heart."

"Thou, my Christabelle," returned the baron, "art gifted with the power of attracting all hearts.—Jaques, I am convinced, esteems thee truly, though he to struggles to conceal his real sentiments; let it be thy

thy care to learn his griefs, that we may endeavour to soothe them."

"In faith," said Fitz-Hugh, "there is a mystery around him which I cannot penetrate;—that la Roche should be in his confidence I do not wonder, but Hamet also appears equally favoured."

The entrance of a vassal, to request the presence of dame Cicely, broke on the discourse.—Obeying the summons, she remained some time absent, and at length returned, accompanied by her husband, le Val, whom hitherto the baron knew only personally as Maynard. The old man threw himself at his lord's feet,—"My gracious master," said he, "I know not how to crave your pardon for a fault which hath had such blessed consequences; yet, I pray you, let the long and approved services of my father, and the trust with which

which your mother honoured me, plead in my favour."

The baron raised him, and shook him kindly by the hand.—"In faith, le Val," replied he, "thou hast no excuse to make; I thank thee for thy care of my beloved Christabelle, and can only wish ye had both known me better, as it would have saved her much sorrow, and me from the pain which a remembrance of her dangers must ever cause."

Fitz-Hugh advanced with his bride,—"Your blessing, good father-in-law," said he, "a general amnesty hath passed;—Bertram was our pleader, and hath well performed his duty."

Christabelle held her hand to le Val,—"My worthy friend," said she, "you are welcome home; I have for a long time deprived your good dame of your society,—I trust

trust you now meet to part no more, till for a happier world."

Le Val kissed her hand respectfully, "Blessed be the hour," answered he, "in which I see this noble hall thus graced with the presence of my honoured lord and beloved lady."—Then turning to his daughter and Fitz-Hugh, he added, "And you, Sir Knight, receive my thanks for the honour conferred on my daughter; who, I trust, will shew, by her affection and duty, the sense she hath of the distinction you have paid her."

"Observe thy father, Adnee," said Fitz-Hugh,—"he commands thee to be loving and dutiful; I pray thee forget not his instructions."

"I pray *you*," replied Adnee, "forget not to deserve them;—let the example be your's, and I will endeavour to imitate it."

"My

"My dear friends," said the baron, "this day we will give to mirth and good fellowship. Dame Cicely will order all proper for dinner; at which I hope we shall meet our friend Jaques more composed than when he left us."

"Heaven grant it!" replied Christabelle, with a sigh; "in the mean while Adnee and myself will walk over some of the adjoining lands."

"I do not chuse to trust my wife without my guardianship," said Fitz-Hugh, "so you must make me of the party; and as three are bad company, it were not amiss to admit the baron."

"I thank thee, Fitz-Hugh," answered de Pointz, placing the unreluctant arm of Christabelle within his own. My lovely companion," added he, in a low voice, "I would I could communicate to thee a share in my satisfaction; methinks I walk in air,

and

and that all nature wears a brighter aspect, since I was blest with thy affection."

Fitz-Hugh and Adnee walked gaily on, the baron with Christabelle followed; both so well satisfied, that the time of dinner arrived before they supposed it was near the hour.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER LVI.

ON entering the castle, the baron requested the presence of le Val and his wife, whom he insisted should be seated at his own board; truly conjecturing that such a distinction was not only a gratification to Christabelle, but also a necessary compliment to the father and mother in law of Fitz-Hugh.

All being prepared, he sent in search of Jaques, who immediately obeyed the summons,

mons, with la Roche and Hamet. The veteran appeared more collected; and the friar accepted the invitation of the baron to dinner, though he had ever before declined it.—" This is indeed a day of jubilee," said he, " and for once I trust that I may without sin, join in the pleasure of my friends."

" Dear father," replied Christabelle, " this is indeed a favour, never before do I remember your sitting with us at table."

" We will estimate the obligation accordingly," added the baron.

Too delicate to place Christabelle at the head of the board, de Pointz took his usual seat, but intreated to be honoured with her company on his right hand; while Jaques, who appeared to wish to be placed near her, took the seat adjoining. The repast, though sumptuous and plentiful, was little decreased, for the hearts of all were full;

and though the baron exerted his hospitality and good humour, and Fitz-Hugh his mirth and conviviality, it was ineffectual to overpower the different sentiments that reigned among the company. Christabelle had in honour of the baron, decorated herself with more than usual care. She wore a robe of white silk, fitted to her elegant form; and on her head, bosom, and arms, some rich jewels, which had appertained to her mother, or had been presented by the late baroness.

The festive board removed, Hamet approached her, and taking her hand, said, —"Now, my beloved niece, accept the rosary, which as Bertram you declined,— it is truly your's; and not only that, but all I possess."

As he spoke he presented the rich ornament, which she received, saying,—"Beloved uncle, I gratefully accept the holy gift,

gift, it will ever be a memorial to me of its first pious possessor; and also of you, whom Heaven snatched from a hateful country to be a parent to the happy Christabelle. Accept my love, my thanks, and duty; and be assured that I will ever consider you as a parent."

Hamet took her hand.—"Methinks, my sweet niece," said he, "that your bracelets do not match; I can give you jewels to suit with those on your left arm, which are apparently most valuable."

"I thank you, my generous uncle," answered Christabelle, sighing deeply, "but I have its counterpart; as for that on my right arm, not the wealth of the world could produce its fellow."

"It is not apparently so valuable," answered Hamet.

"It may be matched hereafter," said Jaques, in a tone of sorrow.

" Impossible !" replied Christabelle.

Fitz-Hugh, who feared a return of the disorder of Jaques, resolved to change the discourse.—" Why do you lose time in talking of gewgaws?" interrupted he. " I know no jewels so precious or bright as the Lady Christabelle's eyes; and as the baron has bid the fair price of his liberty, I trust she will suffer him to be the purchaser."

" Truly urged," added Hamet. " We are all friends, dear Christabelle; and as you accept his suit, do not delay to compleat the satisfaction of the whole party."

" It is befitting that the report of the Lady Christabelle's death should be refuted,' said la Roche, " which will be better done as the Baroness de Pointz, than in her virgin state."

Christabelle's face and bosom were covered with a crimson blush.—" Dear father, I am indeed sensible of my imprudence,"

dence," said she, "and methinks had I now worlds, I could give them to obliterate the stain; but ———"

"And had I worlds, I would give them to possess such a proof of thy affection," interrupted de Pointz.—"Though unknown, ever beloved,—sincerely mourned as the daughter of de Mowbray; esteemed as my dearest friend in Bertram; idolized as Adnee le Val, and as all those conjointly, how can I find a name to express the respect, gratitude, esteem, and affection I feel for thee?—My mother's pupil, my angelic Christabelle, deigned by Heaven, by thy gentleness and purity to efface the remembrance of the past, and to unite in one the jarring contentions of both families. Say, my love, before our joint friends, when may I hope to call thee all mine own?—I trust I know thy heart, mine is open be-

fore thee.—I would not press thy maidenly modesty,—yet, might I form a wish ——"

"My Lord," replied Christabelle, "after what has passed, to affect a reluctance to your wishes, would but add the odium of affectation to my former imprudence. I confess, my exulting heart triumphs in the thought of possessing your affection; and granting me some short time to consider of the duties I have to adopt, I leave all else to my uncle Hamet, and my friend and guardian la Roche."

De Pointz clasped her unreluctant hand with transport, expecting the friar or Hamet to confirm his desires, but both remained silent; while Jaques, with a solemn but firm voice, answered,—"Hath no one a nearer right in the disposal of thy hand than Hamet or la Roche?"

Christabelle, surprised and shocked at the abruptness of the question, involuntarily trembled,

trembled, while the baron, Fitz-Hugh, le Val, Cicely, and Adnee, gazed on the veteran, scarcely knowing whether to be vexed at the intrusive question, or to suppose it the effect of mental derangement.

"My good friend," replied the baron, mildly, judging his conduct from the latter cause, "recollect you not that my Christabelle is an orphan?—I pray you disturb not her mind with past retrospections, it shall be the study of my life to obliterate them."

"I wish not to distress her," answered Jaques, "the unhappy de Mowbray was said to have fallen in Palestine, in an encounter with a party commanded by his father-in-law, Hamet; but is it *impossible* that he might have survived his wounds?—may he not have languished years in captivity?"

The baron started; while Christabelle, unable to speak, grasped his arm, her face pale, and her eyes fixed on Jaques.

"The most minute enquiries were made at the time, I have heard," said the baron, "and his death was but too certain; and even when I was in Palestine, I questioned the priests, whose information only confirmed what I had before heard."

"Lost to the world, and dead to his friends, he might yet be living," answered Jaques.

Christabelle gasped for breath, she struggled for a moment to speak; and disengaging her hand from de Pointz, she suddenly threw herself at the feet of Jaques.—"Oh! if you know ought respecting my father, I conjure you tell me!—Ah, cruel! how could you delay it?—What is the journey to Palestine in a father's cause?—I will, if living, redeem him, or share his fate.—Speak, oh, speak, as you value my senses, or as you regard the peace of my eternal soul!"

The

The mind of Christabelle was too highly wrought for her feeble frame to sustain the conflict, she clasped the veteran's knees with a convulsive grasp, her lips ceased to move, and she fell inanimate at his feet.

"My life, my love, my Christabelle!" exclaimed the baron, endeavouring to snatch her from Jaques, who had raised her, and with cheeks bloodless as her own, was pressing her to his bosom.—"Cruel, unfeeling man, you have slain her!"

"Then will we die together!" answered he, wildly. "Christabelle! my love! my hope! my only blessing! speak to me!"

"Alas!" exclaimed the baron, "he is mad!—I pray ye assist me to disengage my Christabelle gently from his arms."

"Stand off!—She is mine own!—What are *your* rights to mine?—Blessed saints be praised, her colour returns—give her

air. Though my soul is grieved, I am not mad;—in my place, Philip de Pointz would be mad as I."

As he spoke, he seated her in a chair, Cicely and Adnee supported her; while Jaques placing himself before her, fixed his eyes on her face, in which the animation of life began faintly to glow.

De Pointz, who did not dare oppose him, lest he should further alarm her, replied, —"If ye be not mad, declare, why, under the veil of secresy, you have thus violated the peace of my dwelling, and wantonly tortured the feelings of my affianced wife? That I have respected and honoured you, need not be said,—but that I have thought your reserve unworthy your character, I candidly own; and if our friendship be to hold, I now call on you to disclose the mystery you have so cautiously concealed, and openly to reveal who you are."

"Robert

"Robert de Mowbray."

"Gracious saints!" replied de Pointz, "I dream!—It cannot be!—Speak, la Roche, you only can certify that assertion."

"By my hopes of eternal happiness it is most true, my Lord," returned the friar.

"If indeed," answered the baron, after a pause, "this be Robert de Mowbray, and he should doom me to misery, and in Christabelle deprive me of all that can render life dear to me, still let him have mercy on my gentle love;—her senses slowly return, to surprise her further might be fatal. I pray ye, Cicely and Adnee, lead her in."

Christabelle, unconscious of what had passed, raised her languid eyes to the baron, who gently pressed her hand.—"Happiness, I trust, awaits thee, my Christabelle," said he, "de Pointz must be thine or nothing!"

"I

"I pray ye, dame Cicely," added la Roche, "do as the baron requests, and lead her to her chamber.—Heaven grant this surprise prove not too strong for her!"

Cicely and Adnee attempted to lead Christabelle, but her weakness overpowered her; Jaques viewed her with anguish, but fearful of increasing her emotion, remained silent, while de Pointz, passing him hastily, said, in a low voice,—"Pardon me, I will bear her to her apartment.—Though you arrogate a claim superior to mine, yet had I all but a husband's right, and my heart bleeds to see her thus."

As he spoke, he took her in his arms to bear her out, but resisting the effort as well as her strength would permit, she said,—"Remove me not, I conjure you, I now remember all.—Speak, noble Jaques, what said you respecting my father?—Oh, if a hope of his life remains, from this hour I give

give up all selfish thoughts, and devote myself alone to pay the arrears of duty so long so cruelly neglected."

La Roche approached her,—"Daughter," said he, "I heretofore boasted to the baron, that under that weak and fragile form you possessed the soul of a hero; nay, you shewed it in his danger in Palestine.—Call forth that courage now, temper your weakness, and wonder with thankfulness and prayer. —No miracle is above the power of Heaven—your father lives!"

"Lives!" repeated she, in a transport of pleasure, "holy Virgin, receive my thanks. —My noble, valiant father lives!—La Roche would not deceive me.—Yet," continued she, after a short pause, in a voice of deep dejection, "where? in slavery, amidst infidels!—Oh, unhappy cruel fate!—You turn from me," said she, clasping the garment of Jaques, "Alas! I have judged truly!

truly!—Love heretofore raised me above the weakness of my sex, nor shall filial affection sink beneath it.—Nor seas, nor mountains bar my passage from paying my duty to my father."

Jaques's tears prevented a reply, but la Roche answered,—" Nor seas, nor mountains, praises be to Heaven, impede it.—Again I call on you to exert your fortitude; look on him you call Jaques, and let nature whisper the rest to your heart."

Jaques opened his arms, Christabelle sunk within them and clasped his neck, while la Roche continued, — " Blessed, thrice blessed be this hour, in which I resign my charge, my Christabelle, into the arms of her father, my friend, Robert de Mowbray!"

A long silence ensued, the senses of both de Mowbray and his daughter were perfect, but neither had power for some minutes to break the emphatic silence. At length Christabelle,

Christabelle, timidly raising her head, said to la Roche,—"If I am indeed so happy, and the honoured Jaques be my father, no wonder my conscious heart sunk before him, for, alas, he knows all my weakness."

"I do indeed know all thy sorrows and dangers, my love," answered de Mowbray, "and why I have made this long trial of thy feelings, and protracted this happy hour, thou shalt know hereafter; in the mean time, let me see thee calm.—I owe more than my life, my freedom, to the Baron de Pointz,—that debt discharged, we shall have time for mutual communications."

De Pointz appeared lost in thought, his hands were folded on his bosom, and his eyes rivetted on Christabelle.

"The estates of de Mowbray are too poor to discharge the obligations we owe him," resumed the veteran;—"yet my proud heart whispers, I can find the means.

What

What say you, my Lord, will you, from the hand of Robert de Mowbray, receive the richest gem he possesses—his Christabelle?"

De Pointz bent his knee, — "Honoured, most honoured friend and father," answered he, "I receive her as the gift of Heaven, and as such will love her!"

As he spoke, de Mowbray presented him the hand of Christabelle, who sunk on her knees beside him.—"Bless, jointly bless your children then, my father," exclaimed she.

De Mowbray blessed them, and embracing the baron, he added,—"And to thee Philip, representative of thy father Gilbert, I swear by all I hold most sacred, both in Heaven and earth, that I never intentionally offended him.—That I loved thy mother I confess, but my love was without hope, and chaste as that which sinners feel for the saints before whose shrines they bow.

bow. For the unhappy combat which took place between Gilbert and myself, it was involuntary, due to my own honour and to my deceased friend; and was no more than what hereafter thou wouldst do for Robert de Mowbray."

"The soul of Gilbert de Pointz rests, I trust, with the blessed," said la Roche, "and if permitted to know this happy hour, will, now worldly views are done away, approve that pure love which extinguishes hate.—In sleep, thou, Philip de Pointz, received thy father's mandate to hasten to Palestine, as there thou shouldst fulfil his desires.—Thou doubtless hath done so, in the liberation of Robert, and for a reward, hast a right to claim his daughter."

"In calmer hours we will talk more fully of these matters," answered de Mowbray, "for the present, de Pointz, lead Christabelle to her apartment; this scene may well have

have overpowered her, when it hath even shook me, hardened as I am to sorrow and suffering."

"Nay, not so," said Christabelle, taking her father's hand, "if I am weak I am not weary, and cannot therefore leave you.—A father found so shortly, cannot easily be parted with;—let me tarry, I pray you, if but to hear the sound of your voice,—should I retire, I shall think my past happiness but a dream."

Anxious to gratify her, the baron seated her between himself and de Mowbray, his arm supported her waist, while her father held her hand, and thus she received the congratulations of all her friends.

As le Val paid his duty, de Mowbray shook him heartily by the hand,—"My worthy and good le Val," said he, "I pray that we may be better acquainted; your father

father was my true and sincere friend, and the friendship I trust will be hereditary."

"Were it not so, my Lord," answered le Val, "my blood would belie my father and shame my mother.—My respected and venerable parent, though he ever honoured you as his lord and master, loved you as a son. Almost fourscore years and ten had passed over him when he sunk to the grave, yet had he not forgotten to mourn you, as the Lady Christabelle can witness."

"It is most true," replied she, "though weak from age, his senses were still perfect, and from him did I collect many of the most important facts in my chronicle; he loved to talk of my father and recount the exploits of his youth.—Oh, how would his honest heart have exulted to have witnessed this meeting."

"I trust it exults in higher joys," answered la Roche.

"Amen,"

"Amen," replied de Mowbray, "and as amidst the general satisfaction, I am convinced curiosity must be strongly mixed, I will now disclose to you the cause of my concealing myself so long from you, and particularly from the baron and Christabelle. But in order to explain it fully, I think I had better begin my narrative from the time of my quitting England with Richard Cœur de Lion."

"You will highly gratify us all, my dear father, for such permit me to call you," answered the baron, "yet I pray you defer it till to-morrow. Our Christabelle must hear no more to-night, lest some uneasy, though long past occurrence, should break upon the present pleasure."

"The baron advises well," replied de Mowbray, "to-morrow we shall all be more collected; and I shall more clearly recal past events to my memory, than the confusion

confusion of my thoughts would at this moment permit."

"I feel your kindness, my Lord," said Christabelle to de Pointz, "and yield to it, though I confess my affection and curiosity are both awakened."

"No painful retrospection, I conjure you, to-night; let it be given to love and harmony," said Fitz-Hugh. See, if my dame be not already in an April humour. In faith, Adnee, if thou dost not speedily dry up thy tears, I shall be sufficiently provoked to———"

"What?" demanded the baron, willing to join in enlivening the company, "I pray thee let us hear the punishment thou meanest to inflict."

"Marry, to kiss them off," replied Fitz-Hugh; "and in that case, as example is better than precept, let the Lady Christabelle look to herself. Ah, hah! see if a word

word to the wise be not sufficient;—my good dame blushes from the mere apprehension of the danger, for she knows me a man of my word, and is therefore calling forth the sunshine of her smiles to dry up her tears. Ah, Baron, I fear you will never possess my skill in the management of a wife,—wise counsel shall not, however, be wanting."

"From the specimen I have had of thy skill," answered the baron, "I dare promise to be an improving pupil."

"It is near the hour of evening prayer," observed la Roche, "and though I shame to confess it, I quit you with reluctance; yet I rejoice to leave you happy, and will pray Heaven that you may never be less so."

"Farewel, dear and respected father," said Christabelle; "in the morning early will I see you."

"We

"We will attend chapel to-morrow," added de Mowbray, "and in a general thanksgiving pay our duty for the blessings wrought in our favour."

"You will do well," replied la Roche. "A good even to all."

So saying, the friar left them, and a short pause ensued; when Fitz-Hugh, anxious to divert the thoughts of all, exclaimed,—"I pray thee, Adnee, call for thy harp, or lute, and give us a song, it will harmonize our spirits."

The dame Fitz-Hugh, who readily understood the knight's intention, obeyed, and both played and sung; though her hand was less steady, and her voice more tremulous than usual.

"I thank thee, good wife," said he, as she concluded, "though I have heard thee sing better; yet, in faith, thy voice is the sweetest I know, except the Lady Christabelle's,

belle's,—a truth I may now avow, though should not have dared to confess it some time since."

"And what, I pray, would have prevented you?" said she.

"My modesty, and a fear of provoking thy anger."

"When you boast of your modesty, and a fear of giving me offence," replied she, "I pray recal to your memory your diffidence and forbearance at Penzance;—remember these, I say, and blush if you can."

"If I do, it will be for thee," answered he, "who alone was guilty, by throwing temptation in the way too strong for my weak nature to resist. In the same case, tempted by a beautiful woman, was not St. Augustine, or some other of the saints, obliged to take refuge from her spells in a bed of thorns?—Nay, to resist temptation, was

was not even St. Dunstan forced to seize the Devil by the nose with a pair of fiery tongs?—I pray thee then, what could be expected from a poor fellow like myself, without a grain of saintship in my whole composition?—Yet, after all, confess now," added he, archly, "wert thou not glad to catch me?"

"To my confessor, not to thee," answered she with equal sprightliness. "But if it was even so, it was for thy welfare, as matrimony was necessary to hold thee within the bounds of prudence."

"In truth," said de Mowbray, "I think in uniting the Knight Fitz-Hugh and the daughter of le Val, fortune judged rightly, for they have both merry hearts."

"They have," answered de Pointz, "and I trust they will continue so. Adnee's portion shall be my care,—it is a debt

I owe to her parents, and to her friendship for my Christabelle."

"Dear Fitz-Hugh," said Adnee, in a low voice, "I pray thee thank the baron for us both,—my heart is too full to reply as I ought."

"*Dear Fitz-Hugh!*" repeated the knight, regardless of her request, "dear Fitz-Hugh!—Fie on thee, Adnee, those rapturous expressions should only be used when we are alone. I will wager five marks, that the Lady Christabelle would not have ventured such words to the baron for the whole domain of Latimer."

"I take the wager," said de Mowbray. "What sayest thou, Christabelle?—for one of the first proofs of thy duty, wilt thou not win thy father these five marks?"

"Willingly, my Lord," answered she, blushing; "the baron too well knows my heart, for me to deny that he is dear to me."

"Nay,"

"Nay," said Fitz-Hugh, "that subterfuge wins not the wager,—the words must be, *dear de Pointz*, with any appropriate sentence the Lady Christabelle may choose to attach to them:—As, *Dear de Pointz, I am your's when you please*,—or, *dear de Pointz, take my hand, you are master of my heart.*"

"You are an incroacher, Sir Knight," replied she, "yet you shall not triumph, as wisdom bought is generally most precious; therefore, sanctioned by my father, and prompted by my heart, I will address the baron."

Christabelle's voice faltered, she blushed and hesitated; but struggling with her emotion, she after a short pause, added,—"*Dear de Pointz*, blessed by the approbation of my honoured father, and to the height of my own wishes, in your love, I only pray a continuance of my present happiness."

De Pointz pressed her hand with transport to his lips.

"A wager fairly won," observed Hamet, "what say you, Fitz-Hugh?"

"Say!" repeated he, "why I say there is no trusting to appearances; and that I should not hereafter wonder to see the Lady Christabelle as bold as my own varlet."

Thus by the attention and gay humour of Fitz-Hugh, de Mowbray, his daughter, and the baron, were prevented from dwelling on what had passed, and recalling subjects which could but have awakened painful remembrances.

At a late hour they separated with regret, appointing to meet early the next morning; de Mowbray promising to recount all that had befallen him in the Holy Land, and also the reason of the concealment he had used.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER LVII.

CHRISTABELLE rose early; and on her father calling at her chamber door, accompanied him, with Cicely and Adnee, to the hall, where they found all their friends assembled.

Taking some slight refreshment, they adjourned to St. Mary's; where at the foot of the holy altar, in presence of the vassals assembled, de Mowbray acknowledged his daughter. A solemn mass was then said

for the dead; and lastly, a thanksgiving for the happy meeting which had taken place. After which all returned to the castle, except Hamet, who remained with la Roche, to avoid hearing a repetition of what could not fail giving him pain,—the ill deeds of a parent. As it was near the hour of dinner, the wished for communication was deferred till the repast was ended, when Christabelle did not fail to remind de Mowbray of his promise.

"I have not forgotten it," replied he; "but remember, in this case thou must act the heroine, for if I see thee too much moved, I will seal my lips in silence. I endeavour to forget the past," added he, with a sigh, "thou must do so too."

Christabelle was placed between her father and the baron, each held one of her hands; their friends were seated around them, and de Mowbray began his recital.

The

The Narrative of Robert de Mowbray.

" With a heavy and foreboding heart, I took leave of the gentle Corally, her sainted mother, and the noble Baroness de Pointz, when I left England to accompany Richard to Palestine. The promise of the baroness I knew to be sacred, and she had passed her word to guide and direct them in my absence, as they were strangers and unknown to the customs and manners of our country. I therefore was easy on their account, but yet a melancholy I could not conquer hung over me. By adverse winds we were detained for some months in Sicily, from whence I wrote to all my friends; and at length the weather proving favourable, we reached the coast of Palestine.

" Dissensions had unfortunately arisen during the voyage, between the Kings of

England and France; which terminated in the latter leaving us before any decisive action took place, and re-embarking with all his force except ten thousand men, which he left under the command of the Earl of Burgundy. As I am selfish enough to suppose that ye are at this moment more interested about myself than the events which befel the army, I shall shorten my recital as much as possible. My command was secondary only to that of the King of England, when we took our station before Acon, and where we at length came to an engagement with the troops of Saladin.

"At the commencement of the action, by some improvident movements, the wings of our army were in the greatest danger; but our main body fortunately saved them from ruin and disgrace, and turned the tide of the battle.

"Thrice

"Thrice had I, in the heat of the fight, observed the Vizier Hamet rushing through the thickest of his foes, darting his indignant glances around, as if to single out some particular object. At length we met, and as my person was well known to him in my first voyage to Palestine, he instantly checked the charger on which he rode, and raising his arm, aimed a blow at me with his scimitar; I caught the stroke on the battle axe with which I was armed, and his weapon fell to the ground. Amidst all my misfortunes I have ever thanked Heaven that I was inspired with patience to spare him, for he was thus totally in my power, but even at that moment, the command of the sainted Mary la Pole was his shield. I remembered that though he was unworthy he was her husband, and the father of Corally, and turning from him, I sought

opponents who had no claim on either my honour, duty, or humanity.

" La Roche had till now been near me, but the ardour and heat of battle at length separated us, about which time I received a command from Richard to ascend a small eminence with a few men, to reconnoitre the rear of Saladin's troops.—I obeyed, and was on the return to the main body when I was suddenly encountered by a large party who had, no doubt, watched all my motions, and were commanded by Hamet. Though I had before spared him, he encountered me with the fury of an enraged tiger, and having broken my battle axe, I found my utmost skill necessary to defend myself with my sword, without coming to extremities. Thus engaged I again disarmed him, but at the same moment received from some of his myrmidons two wounds in the back, which were

were so severe that I fell from my horse and became the prey of my enemies. A party from Saladin's army, at the same time cut off the small band that had accompanied me, and thus I was left completely in the power of the infidels.

"Though I had fallen I was not senseless, I heard the cry of brutal triumph which escaped Hamet, and by his command I was raised from the earth and covered with some of the trappings of the Saracen horses which had been slain, doubtless to conceal my person. I was conveyed to the camp of Saladin, where, far from my expectancy, or indeed my wishes, my wounds were washed and dressed. The event of the battle was the capitulation and surrender of Acon, after which, each army sought out and buried their dead; but many of the bodies of the Christians, and also of the Saracen chiefs, had been, as I have since

since heard, stripped by the different marauding parties, therefore it is no wonder, that amidst a promiscuous heap of bloody and disfigured corses, that mine should not be particularly known, had it even been there.

" Naturally robust, in a few days, though I suffered greatly, my wounds evidently began to heal. I was attended with care, but no word escaped those who guarded me, and flattered by a fallacious hope, I began to think this extraordinary attention was for the purpose of claiming an exorbitant ransom, and which I had no doubt the king would pay. Alas, my noble master judged me among the slain, for as la Roche informs me, he spared no pains nor promises to discover my body; but all being fruitless, and the last time of my having been seen, as I was surrounded with foes, I was supposed to have been among the disfigured

disfigured and mutilated dead who were hastily and indiscriminately buried in a pit made in the desert by their brethren.

" A truce being agreed on between Richard of England and Saladin, the troops returned to Europe, and with them la Roche; who sick with sorrow and lame from his wounds, repaired to Latimer, where he devoted himself to Heaven, having selected that monastery from his friendship to Mary la Pole, Corally, and the baroness.

" Thus left in the power of my enemies, I gradually recovered, and was at length placed upon a camel, and conveyed across part of the desert to Joppa. To ask questions I knew would be fruitless; but I had no doubt, when we reached the haram, my destination would be in my former dungeon.

" On our arrival, from the number of attendant guards, and the unusual pomp that appeared around, I judged the Vizier Hamet

Hamet was there. I was not mistaken, for after a short stay in one of the outward galleries, where I was guarded by four Saracens, though a chain confined both my legs and arms, I was led through some sumptuous apartments into his presence.—His features bespoke a ferocity even superior to what they had shewn in battle, his eyes glared over me with a haughty and contemptuous gaze, and twice he half drew the dagger from his girdle, as if undetermined whether at that moment to strike or retard his vengeance.

"Till my removal to Joppa hope had not forsaken me, but when there I expected the worst, and resolved to bear firmly whatever might befal me. Hamet was surrounded by his creatures, and on one side was placed an interpreter, well skilled in both the English and Saracen languages; for though I was somewhat acquainted with

with the latter, my knowledge was not sufficient to enable me to maintain a fixed or particular conversation.

"Thou art welcome to Joppa, thou Christian miscreant," at length said he, by his interpreter; "thou hast had thy turn to laugh at Hamet, 'tis now his to think of a reward befitting the debt he owes thee.—Say, what dost thou expect?"

"Death," replied I, calmly.

"A gloomy and horrible smile crossed his features,—"Thou hast judged me more merciful than thou wilt find me," answered he;—"but first say what hast thou done with the old wanton and her daughter, whom thou stole from out this Haram, to accompany thy flight?"

"No wanton accompanied me," replied I, "nor did I steal ought from out this haram."

"Thou

"Thou lyest,—wer't thou not my captive, and did'st thou not steal Mary la Pole and my daughter?"

"'Tis true I was your captive, but no tie of honour or debt of gratitude bound me to my conqueror.—To have secured me from flight you should have given me freedom, and bound me with the chains of obligation instead of those of iron;—the first secures the Christian heart, the second only corrodes the limbs."

"Did honour prompt thee too," said he, ironically, "to make Mary and Corally the partners of thy flight?"

"It did, for the captivity of the first was without hope, and for the second, the offspring of a sainted spirit, baptised in christian tears, was it possible she could hesitate to follow a mother who made duty pleasure, and whose precepts were those of Heaven; rather than to remain with a father,

father, before whose frown she trembled, and who would have sacrificed her to some tyrant, with whom she must have lived a victim and died a martyr."

"Insolent villain," exclaimed he, grasping the hilt of his dagger, "darest thou add to thy guilt by provoking my anger! but say, where are they now? — those Christian saints!" added he, struggling with his passion, "speak, or I will tear my information from thy false and deceitful heart!"

"Dare to utter such another threat," returned I, "and I am silent for ever;— the malice of my fate was spent when I became thy prisoner.— Call forth thy myrmidons, or be thyself my murderer, I am ready, my sufferings will end with death, thine perchance begin."

"He paused for some moments, then said, more calmly,—"If thou dost expect the

the smallest mercy, be explicit, and reply at once to the question I demand."

"As a Christian knight, questioned by a Saracen chief, I would disdain to answer," replied I, "but Hamet, as the father of Corally, hath *a claim* de Mowbray submits to.—Your daughter, Vizier, is my wife, my only wife, for christian husbands pollute not their embraces with such wanton slaves as disgrace your haram."

"Consummate effrontery!—and dost thou dare to avow that hateful intelligence to me?"

"Aye, to any man.—Corally is my wife, and ere this, I hope, a happy mother; so that although I should perish in this hated land, my name I trust will live.—Yes, Hamet, thy descendants, favoured by Heaven, will be Christians, and may hereafter realize what thou didst formerly promise to Mary la Pole."

"Hamet

"Hamet arose from his seat, and traversed the apartment with a hasty step,—"Accursed Christian," at length said he, "by Alla, thou hast tried my patience to the extent. How did Mary dare dispose so unworthily of my daughter?—Where is now that designing woman, who for years hath pretended to be dying, yet hath had art sufficient to deceive me, and repay my kindness with treachery?"

"In England, safe under the protection of the laws, and free to act as her prudence may best dictate, if she yet lives, for never will she overcome the treachery she experienced in Palestine.—Yet let me say, and Hamet hear and avow the obligation, that her spirit covered thee in the hour of battle,—what else restrained my arm when thy weapon was struck down, and thy bosom defenceless before me?—It was not *thy* skill, it was not *my* forbearance that

spared

spared thee, it was the words of Mary, imprinted on my memory and sealed upon my heart with her parting blessing,—"In the heat of battle, my son," said she, "shouldest thou encounter Hamet, by thy example teach him Christian mercy;—remember he is the father of thy Corally, and the husband, though an apostate, of Mary la Pole."

"For a moment the obdurate heart of Hamet appeared touched with remorse, but resolved to conceal it, he hastily ordered me to be removed from his presence. My guards obeyed, and two taking my arms and two following, I was led to my former dungeon, under the haram.

"Without speaking, I threw myself on the ground, and, left alone, gave way to the most bitter reflections.—Night came but no soothing voice calmed my soul, no humane hand administered relief to my woe worn

worn body.—I dropped asleep, but awoke unrefreshed and my brain bewildered.—I fancied that all that had passed since I before left this hateful spot, was a dream, and encouraging the idea, I expected Mary la Pole and Malka.—No cheering light, however, broke on the profound darkness around me, till the sun, high risen, reflected a pale and gloomy gleam of light on one side of the dungeon. Two of my guards then brought me some boiled rice and water, which constituted the food of the day.

" Thus past above a week, when one morning my goalers brought me water to wash ; a favour I estimated highly, as my burning body had much need of that refreshment. They then took me by the arm, and leading me from the dungeon, in a few minutes I again found myself in the presence of Hamet. He was more thinly

thinly attended than when I before saw him, and his features appeared to indicate less ferocity; for he was too good a politician not to have them at command.

"Christian," said he, by his interpreter, "before I proceed to exercise that power which the law of arms hath given me over thee, and thy own treachery hath merited, I will, however I hold thee unworthy, once more converse with thee. I surely need not tell thee, that Hamet is not to be duped a second time;—neither thy faith nor person shall influence my women to favour thy escape to Europe. In Palestine thy fate is irrevocably fixed; nor should the wealth of Richard, thy master, win me from my purpose. Thou art young and mayest live many years in captivity, buried in a dungeon from the converse of man, or from the light of day. Say, what wouldest

wouldest thou do to avoid the horrors that attend thee ?

" Ought that may be done with honour ! nothing more !"

" Honour !" repeated he with heat,— " accursed be the hour in which thou gave so deadly a stab to mine, as stealing Corally ; who, but for thee, would long ere this have been honoured with the embraces of the Soldan, and in all probability have given future kings to rule over this country, and to trample on the necks of the Christian miscreants who like thee might invade it."

" Blessed be the hour in which she escaped the accursed snare !" exclaimed I. " Corally hath, ere this perhaps, given birth to a boy, who may hereafter avenge his father's wrongs ; and as a valiant Christian knight, stand forward with his life and fortune, to snatch this land from the power of unbelievers !—Nay, should she have given

given birth to a daughter, still is my revenge but deferred; that daughter may be the mother of heroes, who, possessing the inherent valour of my ancestors, and the Christian fortitude of Mary la Pole, may, with conjoined power, fix the standard of our holy faith, on the ruins of infidelity."

"Prophetic be your words, noble de Mowbray!" exclaimed the baron, involuntarily interrupting him; while Christabelle, whose eyes swam in tears, averted his ardent gaze, and turned her blushing face towards her father.

"My boldness was too much for the assumed patience of Hamet to support," resumed de Mowbray; "again his ready hand clenched his dagger, and he rushed towards me.—But suddenly stopping, he said, "Thy arts shall not prevail! I see thou wishest to provoke me to strike, but thy death would defeat my vengeance.—

Hear

Hear me, therefore, and in the depth of thy dungeon consider my offer.—Embrace my faith, time, and the renunciation of thy errors, may lead me to think better of thee; or, if fixed in unbelief and folly, thou shouldst reject my generosity, give me from under thy hand, such letters to Mary la Pole and Corally, as may induce them to return to Palestine. I have a French prisoner, who, apprised by thee of their situation and dwelling, I can trust with the delivery, and also to return with them."

"I endeavoured to interrupt him, but he continued,—"Break not on my discourse. I swear by Alla, and the tomb of the Prophet, that if thou dost as I request, and I recover Mary and Corally, or only the latter, to set thee free,—and if thou dost wisely, and adopt my first proposal, to raise thee to honour; or if thou should foolishly reject it, still shall my word bind me, thou shalt

go ransomless to Europe, so I regain my daughter. Think before thou speakest, to-morrow I will again see thee."

"As the interpreter repeated the words of Hamet, my eyes were fixed upon him. He appeared to understand perfectly both the Saracen and English language, though from his pronunciation of the latter, I judged him a Frenchman, and by his garb a convert to infidelity, who had purchased his liberty at the expense of his soul; and finally as his conscious eye sunk under mine, that he was the man whom Hamet had selected for the purpose of betraying Mary and Corally again into his power.

"To intrude on your time to-morrow, Vizier," said I, "would be fruitless; I know my fate, and pray the saints to enable me to support it as becomes a man.—I wish for death, but if slavery must be my portion, I am prepared to endure it.—I was

was born a Christian, and as such will die. For betraying Mary and Corally again into your power, you know me little to suppose I could be guilty of so despicable an action. I honour Mary as a being of superior order to frail humanity; and for Corally, my wife, whom I swore at the altar to protect, the mother of my infant, never! — Let the worst befal me, they are safe.—For the miscreant Frenchman, who could villanously undertake to be your emissary on such an errand, he hath my curse, and will have that of every honest man,—nay more, he will have that of Heaven ;—for his false and apostate tongue must have denied his God before he could have risen so highly in your confidence."

" Hamet struggled to suppress his rage, —" Thou fool!" at length said he, " thou wilt grow wise when it is too late, and then

sue to my deaf ear from the depth of thy dungeon, to execute what I now require."

"When such a request passes my lips," exclaimed I, passionately, "may my pestiferous breath blister my lips.—When I write to entrap Mary and Corally, may the villanous hand which executes it, drop from my false body,—and may the accursed mandate, and its equally accursed bearer sink from the surface of the sea to the depths of perdition."

"Bear him away!—bear him away!" exclaimed Hamet, "I will not trust myself to hear him, lest, by a stroke of passion, I set him free from my power."

"I was immediately removed to my dungeon, and served with rice and water, as before, for the space of a week; when one morning I was led into one of the outward courts, and tied on a camel, and with a strong escort began a journey to Jerusalem.

"I

"I suffered severely as I crossed the desert, for my limbs being confined I had not the power to change my posture; added to which, my lips were parched by thirst, and my body blistered by the sun.—Resolved, however, not to gratify the Saracens by my complaints, no murmur escaped me, and we arrived, without any material occurrence, at the place of our destination.

"The palace of Hamet, in the environs of Jerusalem, from what little I observed, was spacious and magnificent; and under it, as I conjecture, a dungeon of nearly the whole extent, paved with rough stones and arched at the top, enlightened like that at Joppa, simply by an iron grating at the entrance, but which being shaded by a rampart, admitted yet less light or air into this dreary and extensive cave, and which, as you may judge, except just beneath the opening, was totally dark.—Here I was

placed, and served, as at Joppa, by the same guard, who observed as before a profound silence, doubtless by the command of Hamet. After being a resident in this gloomy dwelling some time, I discovered in one corner a heap of small loose stones; with these I first marked the weeks of my imprisonment, but my number was too few, I therefore changed the account for months, and when I had numbered twelve, laid by a large one to mark a year."

Christabelle, whose heart was swollen almost to suffocation by restraining her tears, could bear no more; she threw herself on her father's bosom, and sobbed aloud. Her sorrow was too sacred to be broken, the hearts of all sympathized, de Pointz raised her hand, without speaking, to his lips, and as she withdrew it, she found it bathed with his tears.

"Fie

"Fie on this weak girl," at length said de Mowbray, "past sorrows enhance present joys.—Gracious Heaven," added he, "could I once have expected to live under such accumulated losses.—Mary la Pole, Corally, the baroness, all, all hastened to the grave before me!—Yet I hold thee to my heart, my child, my Christabelle, the precious wreck of all; and however I may feel, I dare not offend Heaven by my complaints."

Christabelle wiped off her tears, she attempted to smile, but the effort was fruitless; and after a short pause she intreated her father to continue.

"Not to day," replied he, "I am at the present inclined to walk, let us seek Hamet, who will be pleased to join us."

CHAPTER LVIII.

ON the ensuing day, la Roche having as before engaged Hamet, de Mowbray, at the joint request of his friends and daughter, resumed his recital.

The narrative of Robert de Mowbray continued.

" To my great satisfaction and relief, one day, as I was exploring with my stretched hands

hands every corner of my prison, I discovered, that from some defect in a part of the arched roof under the ramparts, the rain had found way, and lay to the depth of about two feet, in a hollow beneath.—Though it was stagnate, it was what I had long wished for, and by all that I could spare from the daily jug allowed me, I added to the quantity, and thus enjoyed the gratification of washing myself at pleasure. My constant seat was under the aperture, where I could just distinguish the day from night; and when the day closed, for hours I walked up and down my cavé, listening to the echo of my steps, or sometimes trying the effect of my voice, though I started at the sound.

"I had laid aside one large stone and six smaller ones, when one day I was again taken before Hamet. On being led from my dungeon, the light of the Sun incom-

moded me so much, that I was necessitated to cover my eyes. As I should judge, my appearance was also greatly changed, for on seeing me he started, and uttered an exclamation of surprise !—" Well," said he, after viewing me for some moments, " I judge I see thee more inclined to accept my proffered mercy, than when we last met,—is it not so ? Thy mind hath undergone as great an alteration as thy person."

" Whatever change my person may have experienced, my mind is still the same,"—replied I.

" Hamet looked at me with astonishment.—" Knowest thou," said he, " how long thou hast been in confinement here in Jerusalem ?"

" As I judge, a year, six months, and some few weeks," replied I.

" Thy memory holds good ; how dost thou calculate thy time ?"

" Not

" Not by my sorrow, my sufferings, or the tyranny under which I languish,—or the time would be incalculable."

" Thou knowest how to relieve them—the remedy is in thine own power."

" The remedy is worse than the disease."

" Christian," replied he, " though thou hast injured me in the most tender point, in the honour of my daughter, thy fortitude pleases me, it is worthy a Mahometan; become one, and know me for thy friend. Send for Corally; well do I know her sentiments of duty, to judge she will obey—I swear to give her to thee."

" Never !—Never !"

" Infernal obstinacy ! take the consequence. Hitherto confinement alone hath been thy portion;—punishment shall now be added."

" At your pleasure. I pray ye command your myrmidons to lead me to my dungeon,

the

the light incommodes me, and the human voice sounds dissonant to my ear."

"Hamet swearing I should repent my folly, ordered me to be taken away.

"On the ensuing day, as I was ruminating in my prison, two of my guards entered. I judge they alternately relieved each other. One bore a torch, and the other the instrument with which they inflict the bastinado, though at that time I did not know its use.

"Placing the torch on the ground, they approached, and by the rudeness with which they seized me, I judged their errand was murder. Though I had daily wished for death, the instinctive love of life, which nature hath implanted within man, prompted me to defend myself. A chain confined my legs, and another my arms, but the first was of sufficient length to allow me to walk, and the second, though

though it manacled my wrists, did not entirely prevent the use of my arms.—Seeing I prepared to resist them, they spoke for the first time, and from what I could comprehend, informed me, they came by the command of Hamet, to inflict a punishment on me for my obstinacy.

"Finding me resolute to oppose them, one presumed to strike me, an insult that in a moment made me forget my chains; and taking no time for reflection, I rushed upon him, and dashed him against the opposite wall, with a force that deprived him of sense or motion. His comrade, with more resolution than prudence, seconded the assault; when raising my arms, my chains became weapons, which striking the head of the unhappy wretch, I grieve to say deprived him of life. Heaven pardon the deed, it was involuntary! yet hath it at times hung heavy on my soul; for the

the unhappy man was but the instrument of a tyrant, and acted by a command which he dared not disobey."

"Valiant de Mowbray," interrupted de Pointz, "in your situation it was impossible to act otherwise than you did; his blood rest upon his own head, and upon that of his employer."

"Heaven remove it from all," said Christabelle.—"Having passed such dangers, is it possible that I am so blessed as to be seated by my father?"

De Mowbray pressed her to his bosom, and after a short pause continued.

"The man who had first fallen, speedily recovered his recollection, and leaving the dungeon, after a short absence returned, with the two other guards; who with menacing actions and curses towards me, removed the body of their comrade, though without offering me further personal insult.

"Whether

" Whether some spark of humanity predominated in Hamet's bosom, or that he feared to exasperate me not only to destroy his emissaries, but also myself, no further attempt was made to inflict other punishments than what I before endured ; except, that instead of rice, with which I had been daily served, my allowance now consisted only of black bread.

" Thus past days, weeks, and months, till three large stones had marked as many years of my horrible captivity ; when my cloaths being worn out, I was presented with a kind of vest and wrapping cloak, which change I usually received afterwards about the same period, and was once more led before Hamet.

" He reproached me with having slain his slave ; I reproached him with the insult which caused me to have recourse to so desperate an action. He again urged me to

to write to my friends in England, by his trusty messenger, and to press the return of Corally, and again he received a flat and determined refusal; until, in a paroxysm of rage, I was, as before, led back to my dungeon.

"For two years the melancholy uniformity of darkness and imprisonment continued without change; when one day I heard an unusual noise at the door of my dungeon, and a moment after the heavy bars and bolts on the outside being removed, a man was led in by my Saracen guards, reinforced by an addition of two. The unhappy victim, on the Saracens leaving him, for some time gave way to the most bitter moanings; till sorrow being exhausted by sighs and tears, he suddenly ceased, and to my great astonishment said, in French, "Alas! noble de Mowbray, I am come to die with you!—'Tis true I am an apostate, but

but not the villain you think me.—A fear of slavery, and a promise of freedom, in an evil hour made me yield to the persuasions of Hamet, and deny my faith ; but never did I intend to delude your wife into this accursed country,—my only intention being to gain an opportunity to escape to my own."

" This confession at once informed me, that my unhappy companion was no other than the interpreter whom I had considered as the tool of Hamet; and placing no faith in a man who had denied his God, I judged his being confined with me but as a snare to win my confidence, in order to plunge me yet deeper in misery, I accordingly treated him with the greatest reserve for several days. His food was, however, the same as mine, his bed the same flinty pavement ; and his daily and nightly moans far more loud and vehement. Alas ! mine

was

was not a sorrow to find vent in sighs, complaints, or tears; it was a sorrow pent up in my own heart, and too sacred to be re-echoed amidst the contaminated walls of infidelity.

"By degrees my suspicions decreased and he informed me, that his misfortunes had arisen from an endeavour to escape from Jerusalem, under the escort of some Christian merchants; but that being discovered, after receiving the bastinado, he had been placed in the dungeon with me, and from whence he never expected to be released, except when led to suffer death, for having disgraced the faith of Mahomet.

"An equal sharer in my miseries for some time, during which I had the most convincing proofs how bitterly he lamented his having yielded to the temptation of the Saracens in becoming an infidel, I could not refuse him a share in my confidence; such,

such, however, as only belonged to myself, and to my captivity. Conjointly we daily explored every part of the dungeon, and sounded every wall, to discover if any means of escape should offer; but in vain, the effort ever concluded without hope, and ended by our recommending ourselves to Heaven, and stretching ourselves to sleep,—or more frequently deploring our sad fate, and retracing the blessings of our native land.

"Greatly as I had at first disliked the interpreter, Blanchi, at length convinced he was truly what he appeared, his company afforded me comfort.—"If ever you should escape this accursed den," said he, "a knowledge of the Saracen language may be of the utmost utility to you; attend then to me, and I have no doubt, to give you such general information, as may bear

bear you through common questions without suspicion."

"I adopted this offer, though without hope of profiting by it, it, however, served to beguile some uneasy hours; and again an interval of two years elapsed, during which both Blanchi and myself concluded, that some unforseen circumstance had removed Hamet from Jerusalem, as otherwise we should not have been suffered to remain so long together. At this period, Blanchi, who was far older than myself, and by no means of so strong a constitution, began rapidly to decline, an event which he bore with resignation and thankfulness. Alas! added to the sufferings of his mind, how severe were those of his mortal body,—parched with fever and deadly sickness—with no drink but stagnate water—no food but black, and frequently mouldy bread—no bed to rest his weary limbs—no pillow

to

to ease his aching head ;—yet, conscious of his apostacy, all other objects were lost, or disregarded, in the more material one of expiating that heavy crime.

" At length he became so weak, that his limbs totally failed him—his body wasted —his legs were swollen to an enormous size; and with the utmost difficulty I used to support him under the aperture of the dungeon for air. No mercy was, however, to be obtained from our guards; and to draw a veil over a scene, at the recollection of which humanity shudders, he terminated his life in my arms, energetically praying for mercy and pardon.

" He died one morning early; and as our guards seldom came till evening, the body remained with me till their usual hour, at which time they removed it. I sincerely lamented his loss, for a companion had lessened the horrors of my captivity,

and

and now, deprived of him, they appeared redoubled.

" After the death of Blanchi, my years passed in uninterrupted and undivided sorrow; and I truly think, that had I not sometimes talked for hours to myself, I had forgotten all language. I had learned the Saracen tongue from Blanchi; and to beguile my misery, frequently did I from memory, render long sentences of one language into the other, no doubt incorrectly, but sufficient to preserve the knowledge of both.

" Sixteen years, as I judge, and some months, had I spent in this loathsome and living grave, when I one day received an unexpected and unknown visitor. He was preceded by slaves with tapers, and entering the dungeon, approached me; but dazzled by the strong light, I could not examine his

his person, and know only that it was tall and commanding.

"He asked my guard, who had recently been changed, their predecessors being aged, whether I understood the Saracen language. They replied they knew not, having been forbidden conversation; but that they had frequently heard me talking aloud, though they had never paid particular attention to the language. Turning to me, he next asked me the same question; and on receiving my answer in the affirmative, addressing me, he said, — "Thou hast changed thy master,—my father rests with the dead. One of his commands were, never to set thee free, I am therefore bound by honour and duty to obey;—yet thus far will I transgress in thy favour,—embrace our faith, and thou shalt be removed from this dungeon and enjoy the blessings of light and air, by working

working for thy daily food in the gardens of my palace."

"This dungeon is become habitual to me," replied I, "and light and air are superfluous, unless enjoyed in my own country. If you would indeed shew mercy, send for an agent who purchases slaves; I promise to insure your own price for my freedom, and ask no confidence till it be paid."

"It cannot be," answered he, "my father received my oath a year since, in case of his death to fulfil his purpose; but as he did not bind me as to the manner in which I was to detain thee, I wished to adopt one less repugnant than the confinement which thou endurest."

"I thank thee, and would willingly accept it, if thou wilt leave me free in my faith;—if otherwise, I must die even here."

"Use

"Use thy pleasure, thou knowest my will;—I have spoken my resolution, and will abide by it."

"I have spoken mine," answered I, "and will also abide by it."

"Perish then in thy folly!" replied he, leaving the dungeon, followed by his attendants.

"From this period I remained till the time of Othman's death without change; and convinced that my fate was irrevocably fixed, I saw with pleasure, by the pale light from the aperture, that my beard was grey, for it was grown to a prodigious length; and therefore hoped that the hour was not far distant, when death might snatch me from the power of my oppressors.

"One evening my guard did not bring my food as usual; and devoured with thirst in the morning, the same neglect continued. Though I wished for death, I

trembled at the idea of perishing by hunger, for I firmly believed that to be the determination of my new tyrant. As I judged by the light in my dungeon, about mid-day, I heard a confused noise, as hallooing, the falling of large bodies, the sound of dissonant music, cries of terror, the screams of women, and the trampling of horses. As no common sound could have reached me, I was convinced somewhat extraordinary was the occasion; and as no change could, with me, be for the worse, I sat in silent expectation. At length the heavy grating that covered the opening of the dungeon was torn up, and a voice in the Saracen language, demanded if any one was below. I replied in the affirmative, and prayed for relief, but was an hour before I received any; for the myrmidons of justice could not readily find the descent to the prison, though they had found

found the grate which enlightened it.—You, no doubt, judge this confusion was occasioned by the destruction of Othman's palace, though at that time I did not know the cause. On descending into my dungeon, they dragged me to the light; and wondering at my wretched appearance, demanded who and what I was. Convinced by their questions that they were totally ignorant of all respecting me, I replied, that I was a Christian captive, whom the Vizier Hamet had neglected to redeem; but that I had no doubt, if suffered, I should yet be able to procure ransom.

"The principal made no reply, but commanded me to be taken away with some other slaves, who were at a small distance; and whom I found consisted of some men of different eastern nations, but no Christians.

"From the conversation of these men, I learned that the Vizier Othman had perished

rished by the bow-string, for evil practices against the state, and also, that he had some time before caused his brother, Hamet, to be privately put to death, to prevent his being a sharer in the property left by his father; and, finally, that the whole of his effects had been seized, and his palaces and harams in every district razed and levelled, by the command of the soldan.

"Freed from the dungeon, my condition was yet deplorable; I was straitly confined with men, who though my partners in slavery, regarded me as a creature far beneath them, from my being a Christian. Without money, I had no means of procuring the interest of an agent, dealer in slaves, the nearest of whom, that I could hear of, dwelt at Acon, At the first alarm of Othman's death, all who had it in their power fled, bearing with them what valuables they could find; and it was only some

some unhappy creatures, like myself, that the police had seized, and whom they made no conscience of selling for their own emolument.

" Fearful of keeping us till some other claimant might arise, they speedily sold us to a merchant, who falling sick, we were confined some months; and though not allowed any change of raiment, I enjoyed the gratification of clean water, and cutting my beard. The dealer in slaves, somewhat recovered, proceeded to Rama, where he resolved to dispose of us in the public market; as he said we were not worth taking further, he having lately purchased some young and beautiful females.

" As one of my warmest wishes was to be at a distance from Jerusalem, I carefully concealed my name and rank; as I well knew, that being recognized as one of the leaders of the Christians, would only encrease

the Saracens animosity towards me, and enhance the price of my freedom.

"At Rama, unexpectedly, I gained what I had so ardently wished.—To the son of Gilbert de Pointz I was doomed to owe my freedom, a debt equal to that due to the father who gave me being!—Yes, Philip, I see, I feel the hand of Heaven, that thus wonderfully led us together; and now, by Christabelle, completes its work, by changing our animosities into love, and blending our interests ever in one."

"Honoured de Mowbray!" replied the baron, "it was indeed the work of Heaven.—Even in sleep, the spirit of my father prompted me to the voyage, which hath been followed by such blessed effects."

"Judge my feelings," resumed de Mowbray, "for I cannot describe them, when brought to your camp, I was first informed by Gregory, that I owed my liberation

ration to the son of Gilbert de Pointz.—Pride, vexation, respect, gratitude, mingled in my full heart, and swelled it to agony. In the first paroxysm I resolved to throw back the obligation, and remain a captive; but that was impossible, neither the act, nor the obligation were to be cancelled. From Gregory too I learned the death of the Baron and Baroness de Pointz, that of my wife, and also that of my daughter; and hope again sunk in my bosom, and my freedom appeared of no estimation. In this distraction of mind you found me when you returned to your tent; but sorrow had curbed the first emotion of my wounded pride, and scalding tears somewhat calmed the ebullition of my heated brain. Ah, Philip, you offered me your friendship, to be unto me as a son; and as my eyes glanced with scrutinizing gaze over your person, in spite of prejudice my heart could not but

acknowledge your extreme likeness to your mother,—and in despite of myself I loved you. Next entered Christabelle, (Bertram I should have said;) at once the resemblance his features bore to Mary la Pole, and Corally struck me. The voice too was the same, even time had not effaced the impression; the same fragile form also, the habit and sex, as I supposed, only different. Overpowered by these various sensations, you may recollect an almost immediate fever seized me, during which I have not forgotten the cares of all; but truly confess, though I cannot define the reason why, but none appeared so dear as those of Bertram."

Christabelle interrupted the narration by throwing herself into the arms of her father. "Ah," exclaimed she, "had I known I was attending a father, how much more assiduous had been my cares?—Yet," added

added she, blushing, "how should I have sustained his presence in that degrading habit?"

"In an interval of my malady," resumed de Mowbray, "when alone with Bertram, I questioned him respecting his situation, and whether he was related to the baron; he informed me that he was not,—yet astonished me by the feeling he expressed for the baroness, and the tenderness with which he spoke of my memory, though at the same time there was a guarded reserve in his manner, that to me appeared as though he did not wish to reveal all he knew.

"You, de Pointz, requested to be informed of my name, but I resolved at all events, for a time to conceal it; and dedicating the first interval of my sickness to what I regarded an indispensible duty, I not only wrote a testament, but an account of

who I was, and my reason for concealment, intrusting the packet to yourself.

" I must here digress, to inform you, that so many years had passed since I had written, that I had almost forgotten how to form either my letters or words ; and though the writing might from the care I bestowed, be legible, I am convinced it is far from correct.

" On my convalescence you continued your journey till we reached the chapel of St John, where, attending the holy mass, judge my surprise and emotion, to hear a solemn service in that country, for the repose of my own soul.

" At a loss to judge what pious friend had ordained it, it however convinced me that my death was considered as certain ; and my mind softened by sickness, and gratefully alive to the attention you, de Pointz, had paid me, I had resolved to collect

lect my spirits, and disclose to you my real situation, when the same evening an event took place which made me change my resolution. You entered into a conversation with me respecting your father,—you accused Robert de Mowbray of having robbed him of the affection of your mother, and of being the cause of your never having enjoyed her natural solicitude ; and finally, lamented that it was past your power to avenge the wrongs he had done you."

" I remember the discourse," interrupted the baron, " and that with great calmness you replied, by a recapitulation of Robert de Mowbray's motives, (as if you had heard them reported) and his subsequent sorrow; appealing to myself, how I should have acted in the same situation."

" True," answered de Mowbray, " I could not but revere your filial duty, and confess, that in your place the same feeling would

would have actuated me ; yet your warmth made me resolve to delay the disclosure of my secret, till our return to England, when at least I hoped to discharge my pecuniary obligations.

" The same day in which I formed that resolution, I had casually learned from you that la Roche was living ; an event that afforded me on his account much pleasure, and on my own, the gloomy satisfaction that I might learn from him every circumstance concerning those I lamented.

" Impressed by curiosity respecting the mass I had heard, I repaired in the morning alone to the chapel of St. John's, and particularly enquired who had caused such respect to be paid to the memory of Robert de Mowbray, for even there I forbore to disclose myself. The priest, equally guarded, replied that they were nobly paid by different benefactions, though not at liberty to

to reveal the names of the donors, which information was all I could obtain.

"I must next call back to your remembrance, my Christabelle, our walk alone in the woods of Joppa, where, as Bertram, your attention was attracted by the ruins of the haram, and which I then informed you, were the remains of the once magnificent dwelling of Hamet.—Your emotion and tears astonished me; I saw with wonder the fearful trembling Bertram, with a spirit undaunted as my own, descend the gloomy and broken stairs, and with respect and tenderness contemplated the piety with which he prayed for those who had perished in that accursed den of tyranny.—Thy piety even here on earth was rewarded, that eventful hour gave me a brother in Hamet, gave thee an uncle, and yet more, prepared a soul for Heaven.

"Judge

"Judge my surprise when informed that the unhappy man we had saved from the dungeon was the son of the Vizier Hamet. My heart bled as he recapitulated his sufferings, and in the sorrows of the son, I forgot what I had suffered from his father; yet wishing to know his disposition before I disclosed myself, I resolved to preserve the character I had assumed, though my secret had nearly escaped me, when he so nobly and generously expressed himself respecting Mary la Pole and Corally.

"By earnest entreaty I obtained leave of the baron to read the chronicles of Christabelle; but, alas! how did they tear open my half healed wounds. In the writer, how did my active fancy designate in my unknown child the characters of those on whom my heart had fixed all its worldly happiness. In her bold vindication of her father, I traced the noble and fearless candour

candour of the baroness;—in her unassuming spirit, the gentleness of Corally,—and in her prayers for all, the piety of Mary la Pole.—That child whom I wept as dead, whose memory dwelt on my sad heart, whom, I fondly indulged the idea, had she been spared, would have soothed all my sorrows.—Merciful Heaven! I hold her to my breast! I feel the inestimable blessing in every pulse of my agitated frame, and in the great and gracious gift, methinks I clasp the remains of those sainted and idolized spirits."

The emotion of both de Mowbray and his daughter prevented his continuing, and de Pointz insisted on the narrative being delayed until the next day.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER LIX.

ON the ensuing morning, all being arranged as before, de Mowbray resumed his story.—

"I shall pass over the grief caused me by the perusal of the chronicles.—The cloud of secresy that hung over Bertram astonished me;—I questioned Maynard in vain, but resolved, when I came to England, if I found him worthy, and I possessed the means, to adopt him for my son.

"The

"The manly stand which the baron made on leaving Palestine, in favour of Hamet, if possible, enhanced my value for him; and I dreaded, when once known to him, that he might withdraw his friendship from me.—Yet I was resolved, let what would be his conduct, never to forget he was the son of the heiress of Latimer, and my liberator from slavery.

"On reaching Penzance, our friend Fitz-Hugh made a discovery of the sex of the gentle Adnee, and in consequence the charge of hypocrisy and unchastity fell on Bertram. His former conduct, his piety at all times, however clear his guilt, staggered my belief, and raised doubts in my mind which were scarcely allowable; and when Adnee refused to wed him, I regarded him but as a misguided youth whose passions had for a time overpowered his reason.—The change of Fitz-Hugh's disposition in respect

respect to him, astonished me, and though I knew him volatile, it gave me a presage that some circumstance, which he was not at liberty to divulge, had transpired in his favour.

"When informed of the departure of the pilgrims, and the knight brought back to Hamet the rich rosary with which he had presented him, it was plain, that whatever were the faults of the youth, that self interest was not among the number; and I internally lamented that I had not sought some opportunity of conversing with him alone, when I might have been included in his confidence.

"Some twelve or fourteen days after the pilgrims left us, you, my Lord, took your departure for Hampshire, and Hamet and myself the road to Durham. I was anxious to learn every event from la Roche respecting my family, which, when once obtained,

tained, I resolved on disclosing myself to you.

"Our journey was prosperous, though with a heavy heart I retraced the scenes of my youth, and my sad soul sickened as I contemplated the white turrets of Latimer, through the surrounding trees — Fearful of trusting my feeling, I prayed Hamet to proceed with the attendants you had allotted us to the castle, while I repaired to the monastery; promising either to send for him thither, or to join him at the castle in the course of three or four hours. I perhaps need not inform you that Bertram, who had reached the castle some days before, had apprised both Cicely and la Roche that they might expect strangers; they were, therefore prepared to receive a liberated captive and a Saracen convert, the latter indeed known to them as the half brother of my Corally, and whom Cicely attended

attended with the utmost respect. For me, I proceeded to the monastery, where at the gate I enquired for father la Roche, saying, I had business of import to communicate to him.

"Pass through the chapel to the cloysters," answered the porter, "and you will find him alone.—Know you the way?"

"Answering in the affirmative, I did as I was desired, and discovered my friend before he saw me, for he was reading.—Though almost twenty years had passed since our separation, his features were little changed, save that they were more placid, and his eyes had lost their former animation.

"I was wrapped in my dark travelling cloak, and my head was covered, so that on my approach, having only a cursory view, he did not recognise me.—"Give you good day, my friend," said he, "is your business with me?"

"I

"I strove to reply, but my heart was too full to suffer me to speak, and uncovering my head, I could only hold out my hand in silence.

"The friar started, the book he held fell from his hand,—"Holy Virgin," exclaimed he, crossing himself, "what may this mean?—Why this awful visit to me?—Perturbed spirit rest, spare thy reproaches, not the honour of my own child, had Heaven granted me one, could have been more sacredly guarded than that of Christabelle;—but could I see her die?—Yet, I conjure thee, by the saints, declare thy purpose, and be what it may, I devote myself to fulfil it."

"The astonishment caused by this speech banished all other feelings,—it was plain la Roche regarded my appearance as supernatural, and anticipated to himself reproaches which he considered as his due. That

That he knew me was evident by his mentioning Christabelle, and a pang more bitter than death shot instantly through my heart,—a doubt that she had died dishonoured."

The pale cheeks and trembling limbs of Christabelle broke on her father's narrative, the baron presented her a cup of water, while de Mowbray said,—"By my life if thou art thus afflicted I will cease.—My supposition, though erroneous, was natural."

"Truly so, dear father," answered she, "your Christabelle's conduct might well warrant the supposition; but though I must ever blush for my weakness, I thank Heaven my heart was ever clear from guilt. But I pray you proceed, I will be more collected in future."

"You will do well," answered de Mowbray, resuming his story.—"A chaos of thought

thought bewildered my brain, and regardless of undeceiving la Roche, I replied,—"Speak, declare what villain hath dishonoured her, that my sword may rip out his treacherous heart?—De Pointz it cannot be, for he never saw her. Merciful Heaven, for what am I reserved?—Where did the unhappy girl, dying, conceal her shame?—A prisoner so many years, deprived of all that rendered life dear to me, and my blood poisoned, even to its last dregs, in the person of my child!—Oh, Hell, Hell, thou hast spent thy venom and I defy thy further malice!"

"The blood, as I spoke, rushed from my bursting heart and mounted to my brain, I fell senseless on the pavement; where la Roche, convinced I was no spectre, called aloud for assistance, and was speedily surrounded by the brethren of the house, one of whom immediately bled

bled me in the arm, which in all probability saved my life. As my senses began to return, la Roche left me; and drawing aside the superior and some of the elders, he informed them of what had passed, and entreated their opinion how to act in the dilemma in which he was involved, between his friendship for me and his oath to Christabelle. The superior, after expressing his surprise at finding me living, gave his opinion, that in the present case the oath was sinful, as it concealed a child from a parent, and therefore was more worthily broken than kept; that for himself, if la Roche objected to it, he would make the disclosure, and then leave me to act as I thought fitting.

"Thus settled, they returned to the cell, where they had placed me on a couch; and finding me recovered, and my effervescence cooled from the blood I had lost, they

they with cautious kindness minutely informed me of all. Judge my feelings, on learning that my Christabelle had been concealed under the disguise of Bertram; the youth I loved so truly, whose piety I admired, whose weakness I pitied, and whom I tried to think innocent, in spite of every conviction to the contrary. The dangerous lengths to which the love of de Pointz had led her, made me tremble, but informed of her safety under the care of Cicely, and in the guise of her daughter, I became more calm; and recalling to my remembrance the noble and disinterested conduct of the heiress of Latimer in my behalf, and what I had since owed to her son, the baron, my heart proudly acknowledged a daughter, who might hereafter boast that she had repaid her father's obligations. How to act in respect to her in future, the friars did not presume to advise,

nor was I at once determined. I knew the baron sincerely esteemed Bertram; but that was no security that as a woman, and my daughter, that affection should become love. The baron when he knew me, might inherit his father's hatred to my blood; or, on the contrary, and as I flattered myself the most probable, he might, in respect to his mother's will, and moved by Christabelle's affection, give his hand without his heart,—in which case the presence of her father would not fail to influence him.

"From la Roche I learned, that scared by the violence of Fitz-Hugh, and convinced of his affection for the daughter of le Val, she had disclosed herself to him at Penzance; where he had not only bound himself by oath to preserve her secret, but also to assist her in whatever she might undertake.—That at present she kept concealed, except from some few she could trust;

trust; and had resolved, if she could assume courage, to pass for the daughter of Cicely le Val, when she again met the baron.

"Left alone with la Roche, we consulted for some hours, and the final determination was, that I should, if possible, continue my disguise, and trust to love and youth to end all to our wishes; particularly as I had an opportunity of remaining in the castle, from the baron's own invitation. This point arranged, I entreated Hamet might be sent for; and as I had no doubt of his honour, and of his truly proving himself my Christian brother, I acquainted him with all I myself was informed of.—His emotion did not indeed equal mine, but his satisfaction was beyond description. He had, he declared, ever loved Bertram beyond all others; and now to know they were allied by the ties of blood, gave him the highest satisfaction.

"At first I thought of entrusting dame Cicely, or Fitz-Hugh, with our secret; but la Roche was of opinion to leave all as it was, as the knowledge of Robert de Mowbray overlooking their actions might prove a restraint.

"All arranged, it was near midnight when we left the monastery to return to the castle. Anxiously as I wished to see my Christabelle in her proper habit, and with her complexion of its natural hue, I was fearful of trusting myself, lest an involuntary burst of paternal affection should betray me.

"The morning after the discovery, repairing to the chapel to meet la Roche, we found him accompanied by my daughter. Although both Hamet and myself restrained ourselves as much as possible, yet it was evident that our ardent looks alarmed her; for her face was dyed with blushes, and she left the friar as speedily as possible."

"My

"My honoured Sir," interrupted Christabelle, "the blood from my conscious heart coloured my cheeks; I trembled so that I had nearly fallen, for I dreaded lest you should recognize Bertram."

"There was little danger," replied de Mowbray, "had I not been apprised.—Thy features were indeed the same, but the alteration of complexion, hair, and habit, made so great a difference, that no one could have suspected it."

"On the arrival of the baron, Fitz-Hugh, who sometimes visited the friar, pressed him to urge Christabelle to disclose herself; adding, that he was convinced that he had interested the baron respecting her, and that it should go hard if he did not force a meeting between them in a day or two.

"He effected what he promised, and flattered himself with having succeeded;

and when he next saw la Roche, laughed heartily at the anger of the baron, because he pretended not to discover the resemblance which the maid bore to Bertram.

" To my great satisfaction it was speedily evident, that unassisted by rank, power, or recommendation, the baron's heart was thine, my Christabelle; though doubting a return of affection, and struggling with his passion, he was jealous of Fitz-Hugh, and tried thy faith by the offer of Villeneuf."

" In truth," interrupted the baron, laughing, " you may if you please, carry the jest yet further; for neither yourself nor Hamet escaped my suspicions, though I blushed to avow them even to myself."

" Do you remember," resumed De Mowbray, " the manner in which I spoke to you, my Christabelle, when I found you insulted by Villeneuf?"

" I

"I do, my Lord. You reproached me with trifling away my happiness, and subjecting myself to insult. Your words and manner astonished me, and made me more than ever dread your presence."

"In the mean time, our friend Fitz-Hugh was a thrifty woer," continued de Mowbray, "and having gained his Adnee's consent, resolved to wed; but by the advice of la Roche, caused the ceremony to be performed at Auckland, as Christabelle passed for le Val's daughter. In this case Jonas's curiosity was of the utmost service; for his prying nature having led him to discover the parties, the baron was thrown off his guard, and at once revealed the secret of his own heart, and obtained an avowal of thine.

"It was now that my fears were nearly over; but thou, obstinate girl, withstood the prayers of la Roche and Fitz-Hugh,

and almost provoked me to declare myself before *thou* hadst made a full discovery to the baron.

" The disclosure became the more necessary, as I daily feared, that among the guests who visited the baron, some one might recognize me ; as it was evident, the knight la Tours had a knowledge of my person, though he could not recollect where.

" La Roche at length insisted. He even threatened to interest the church to make you, my Christabelle, act according to our wishes, and at length with difficulty succeeded;—and I enjoyed, without having influenced either party, by word or action, the transport of hearing you, in the presence of your joint friends, consent to unite your fortunes, for life, when Hamet and la Roche should appoint.

" It was then my hour of triumph!—It was then my time to claim my Christabelle, the

the precious wreck of my whole wealth! But my feelings were too highly wrought for prudence, and the tide of love which had been so many years restrained, at once overpowered thee and myself. You now know all, my dear child. My sorrows have been many, but the wisdom of Heaven decrees what is best for man; and I can only pray, that every blessing that has been withheld from me, may be multiplied on thy head, and on that of the noble and brave youth who possesses thy heart."

As de Mowbray concluded, both the baron and Christabelle knelt at his feet; he repeatedly embraced and blessed them, and all becoming more calm, they received the congratulations of their friends. They were soon after joined by Hamet and la Roche, and the time passed to the satisfaction of all. During the conversation of the morning, Fitz-Hugh, addressing

la Roche, said,—"In faith, father, with all my cunning, I was well deceived. — I thought myself the only possessor of the Lady Christabelle's secret; though I must confess that at times there was a keenness in the eye, and a quickness and seeming mystery in the replies of our noble Jaques that made me suspect something, though I could not define what."

"All is right, my son," answered la Roche, "but for you this business had neither been so well nor so hastily terminated."

In cheerful conversation they then remained till the hour of dinner, after which mounting their horses, they rode over the domain, which they resolved to embellish and improve, and make their usual residence.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER LX.

AT an early hour Christabelle arose, and waited in the gallery that led to her father's chamber till he left his bed.—"My beloved girl," said he, "what dost thou here so early?"

"I came, my Lord, to receive your blessing," answered she, "and, if you will permit me, to walk with you till the hour of breakfast."

"Willingly,—but shall we not make de Pointz of the party?"

"No,

"No, my good Sir.—I wish to speak with you alone, respecting my own extravagance, which hath led me to expend some large sums during my pilgrimage; and also to inform you, that a very considerable surplus yet remains in the hands of le Val, from the arrears of the estates of de Mowbray."

"La Roche informed me the same, my thoughtful girl; and for the sums expended in Palestine, were they not well employed?"

Christabelle kissed his hand,—"But, my Lord," said she, "the testament I made, which left the estates for seven years to the convent, gives me pain; though, as you are returned, it cannot of course be valid."

"The fathers," answered de Mowbray, "destroyed the deed which made it theirs, as soon as they knew I was living;—nor did they, as they say, ever mean to withhold it from

from thee. Hamet and myself, however, intend to make them an equivalent; I out of the arrears in the hands of le Val, and he out of the riches thou knowest he possesses.—Let thy mind, therefore, rest satisfied, we have more than a superfluity for happiness."

De Mowbray then turned the discourse to other subjects. He lamented that Christabelle had never known her mother or Mary la Pole, and asked repeated questions respecting the last years of the baroness.

Christabelle informed him that her life was calm and her end pious, that her only sincere grief was not seeing her son; and finally, that her care for the eternal repose of himself, Robert de Mowbray, was testified by the gift of the golden censer to the chapel of St. John, in Palestine.

"Heaven rest her," replied he.—"Never, my Christabelle, while life is granted me,

me, will I break my fast, or lay my body to rest, without a prayer for her, thy gentle mother, and Mary la Pole.—Oh, Christabelle, how, in the loathsome darkness of my dungeon, hath my soul appeared to hold converse with those sainted spirits whom I was doomed never more to behold! Of the two last I had no memorial, for on my being wounded my jewels and rings were torn off; but the bracelet of the baroness sewed in my under vest escaped, and I afterwards concealed it in my hair. Gracious Heaven, I counted daily the number of beads, and, like a rosary, as I told them, recommended my beloved friends to the saints. In my relation of yesterday, I forbore to name it, lest it should awaken unpleasant remembrances in the baron's breast. But mark me, Christabelle, when it shall please Heaven to call me, see thou that it be laid in my bosom and buried with me; the

the innocence with which it was given, and the chastity with which I have ever thought of it, will make it my passport to bliss.—Nay, no tears, I trust to spend many happy years with thee; to grow old among thy children, and in their caresses to forget my past unhappy days."

Thus conversing for some time, they at length returned, when they found their friends assembled in the hall. De Pointz had seen them from the window of his apartment, when they first left the castle, but wishing them to enjoy a private conversation, he had restrained himself from following them.

In the course of the day, the baron presented the Knight Fitz-Hugh with a grant of land to a considerable extent, in the vicinity of Auckland; and to his bride a fortune, in gold and jewels befitting a wife of his own rank. The good le Val and his respectable

pectable dame refused all change; and only requested to end their days in the castle, and testify their gratitude and duty while Heaven should give them power.

It was now that the authority of a father was added to the importunity of a lover, and Christabelle was obliged to fix the time when her fate should be indissolubly united with that of de Pointz. The report respecting her death was refuted, the return of Robert de Mowbray proclaimed, and the intended nuptials announced in a manner befitting the rank of the parties.

At length the day so ardently desired by de Pointz arrived, the white banners waved from the towers of the castle, the chapel was prepared.—The senior vassals of the domain lined the way from the castle to the convent, in two rows, between which first walked the minstrels, with the youths and maids strewing flowers and singing songs

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of congratulation;—next came six heralds, bearing banners, followed by twenty Knights, unarmed, save by their swords, cloathed in silken vests and cloaks, each leading the daughter of a knight, dressed in white garments, and garlands on their heads. Then walked de Mowbray and Hamet, both richly clad, and attended by two knights, one of whom carried their armorial bearings conjoined, and the second the holy cross of Jerusalem, both curiously emblazoned on white satin.—The Baron de Pointz, leading his beauteous bride next followed, both in bridal robes, enriched with diamonds and precious stones, accompanied by Fitz-Hugh and his dame, with le Val and Cicely; the whole procession being closed by fifty armed soldiers who had attended the baron in Palestine.

The procession was met at the door of the chapel by the priests of the monastery, with

with la Roche at their head; and all being arranged, and high mass solemnly sung, la Roche, who was appointed to perform the ceremony, requested the parties to draw near. The enraptured baron clasped the hand of his trembling and blushing bride, and approached the altar, when the holy service began, and de Mowbray, in the presence of Heaven, gave his daughter to Philip de Pointz. The nuptial benediction pronounced, and mutual congratulations passed, they returned to the castle, amidst the acclamations of the vassals, who from infancy had idolized the Lady Christabelle, and now set no bounds to their joy, on seeing her once more restored to them.

The celebration of the nuptials lasted a month, during which time the nobles from the adjacent countries, paid the baron their congratulations on the happy occasion; and among whom, many of the seniors recognized

cognized their former friend and competitor in arms, Robert de Mowbray.

The rejoicing concluded, le Val gave in his accounts, and astonished de Mowbray with the surplus that remained in his hands of the wealth collected on his domains; and which having been accumulating during his own minority, many of the old incumbrances had been cleared by the Baron Falconberg, and yet more in the infancy of Christabelle, through the cares of the baroness.

It was then resolved to visit his different domains, one of which lay in Dorsetshire, and another, more extensive, in Yorkshire; and which de Mowbray finding most to his liking, he resolved to improve and embellish—and adjoining to which, Hamet, who entreated that they might never separate, purchased lands to a considerable amount.

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These arrangements fulfilled, they visited the different estates of de Pointz and those of Falconberg, spreading plenty and joy wherever they came; and lastly, at the request of de Mowbray and the baroness, they took a voyage to Normandy, where they remained for four months, after which period they returned to the Castle of Latimer.

The first year of the marriage of the baron and Christabelle being elapsed, their mutual satisfaction received a joyful increase, by the birth of a son. The baroness nourished this first pledge of their love at her bosom, and Robert de Mowbray entreated to answer for him in baptism; a request which both the baron and Christabelle joyfully complied with, not doubting he would name him after himself. They were, however, deceived, for on being called on at the font, he answered, —

"*Gilbert!*

"*Gilbert!* in respect to the memory of his noble grandfather, the late Baron de Pointz." A compliment which the baron received with gratitude, and which redoubled his esteem for de Mowbray.

The baroness was, in the process of a happy life, during which she enjoyed the reward of her piety and affection, the gladsome mother of five sons and three daughters. The first Gilbert, the second, whom de Pointz claimed the right of naming, Robert, the third, whom the baroness presented at the font, Philip, the fourth de Mowbray named Hugh, after the baron Falconberg, and a fifth whom Hamet appointed his heir, was called Bertram. The daughters were Corally, Christabelle, and Mary.

At the baptism of Bertram, as the smiling infant was presented round to its sponsors, de Mowbray, then advanced in years,

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pressed it to his bosom, saying, "Gracious Providence, how weak is man!—how did my mortal self-created wisdom arraign the knowledge of Heaven, and deem impossible, what in the guise of a dream was communicated by the shadow of Mary le Pole in the dungeon of Joppa,—"*From the blood of De Pointz, shall spring heirs both to thy house and mine; and from ours shall be given heirs, to rule over the extensive domain of de Pointz.*"

The knight Fitz-Hugh, by his Adnee, was father to three sons, and the same number of daughters, two of whom married sons of de Pointz; and through the series of a very long life, was the friendship of the families unbroken.

La Roche lived to a good old age, as did also le Val and Cicely; during which they had the satisfaction of contemplating the happiness

happiness they had in a great measure been the instruments of promoting.

When de Pointz was father to two sons, the youngest of whom was at his mother's breast, his duty called upon him to join the Barons, in order to oblige King John to restore the former charters granted by Henry and Edward, and to have them irrevocably confirmed; and which, after much bloodshed, were signed at a spot called Runne-Mede, between Staines and Windsor.

Robert de Mowbray accompanied the baron, and though it was evident the baroness suffered severely at the separation, no complaint escaped her; but wiping away her tears, she said to Hamet, who remained with her, "I pray you, good uncle, let this weakness be a secret between us, for mine is selfish grief, and in my own gratification I forget the good of thousands."

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The return of a husband and father banished sorrow, and years which weakened personal charms, strengthened an affection, which had not only love, but honour and esteem for its basis.

Such were the material events of the lives of Philip and Christabèlle de Pointz, who caused their histories to be added to the Chronicles first written, and which together were inherited by their children; for one of whose descendants these annals were afterwards copied, and who appears by the envelope to have been created Earl of Latimer some time previous to the year 1330.

THE END.

Norbury, Printer, Brentford.

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